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ABSTRACT

Education is bound to society, and different educational strategies rise from the society and culture in which people live. This book presents an international perspective on problems and challenges from early education through adult education and highlights teacher education from the point of view of individual cultures and from a cross-cultural perspective. The book contains 22 chapters (by authors representing 12 different countries) organized into 7 sections under the following headings: (1) "Childhood in a Changing Society"; (2) "Children and Education in a Cultural Context"; (3) "Early Education and Care"; (4) "The Views of Children, Parents and Caregivers on Education"; (5) "Children's Health and Wellbeing in Education Context"; (6) "Examples of Implementing Educational Issues in the Context of Different Societies"; and (7) "Challenges for Research-Based Teacher Training." The two chapters in section 1 are: "The Century of the Child, Part II" and "Is It Possible To Improve Tolerance among Elementary School Children?." Section 2 contains five chapters, "Children, Culture and Education," "The Development of the Identity in the Cultural Context," "About Sex-Based Interpretation Frames in Education," "Socialization Attitudes and Practices of Korean Mothers of Young Children," and "An Oral History Project on the Changing Educational Ideas of Teachers in New Zealand." The seven chapters in section 3 are: (1) "Early Childhood Educare"; (2) " Children's Creativity in the Preschool Institutions in Macedonia"; (3) "Quality Science Investigation in the Early Years"; (4) "Early Childhood Arts Games"; (5) "Let's Add R.I.C.E. (Relevant, Intercultural, Childhood Experiences) to Our Curriculum"; (6) "Portfolios as a Means of Self-Assessment in Preschool and Primary School"; and (7) "Conditions for Appropriate Pedagogical Organizing and Performing of Play in the Preschool Institutions in Macedonia." Sections 4, 5, and 6 include three chapters each: "Children, Parents and Caregivers," "How Can We As Parents and Educators Foster Metacognitive Development?," "Physical Punishment and Education in Early Childhood," "Special Needs Children," "The Play of Disabled Children in Early Development," "An Evaluation of Health-Promoting Schools in the Finnish Network," "Futures Thinking," "Early Education in Ireland," and "Formal Schooling for 5 Year Olds in New Zealand." The six chapters in section 7 are "The Teacher as Researcher," "The New Initial Programme for Preschool Teachers in Slovenia," "The DART Mentor Teacher Model," "Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education Teacher Certification," "Situated Learning in Kindergarten Teacher Education," and "Portfolio Assessment: An Early Childhood and Family Studies Department Model." Most chapters contain references. (BC)

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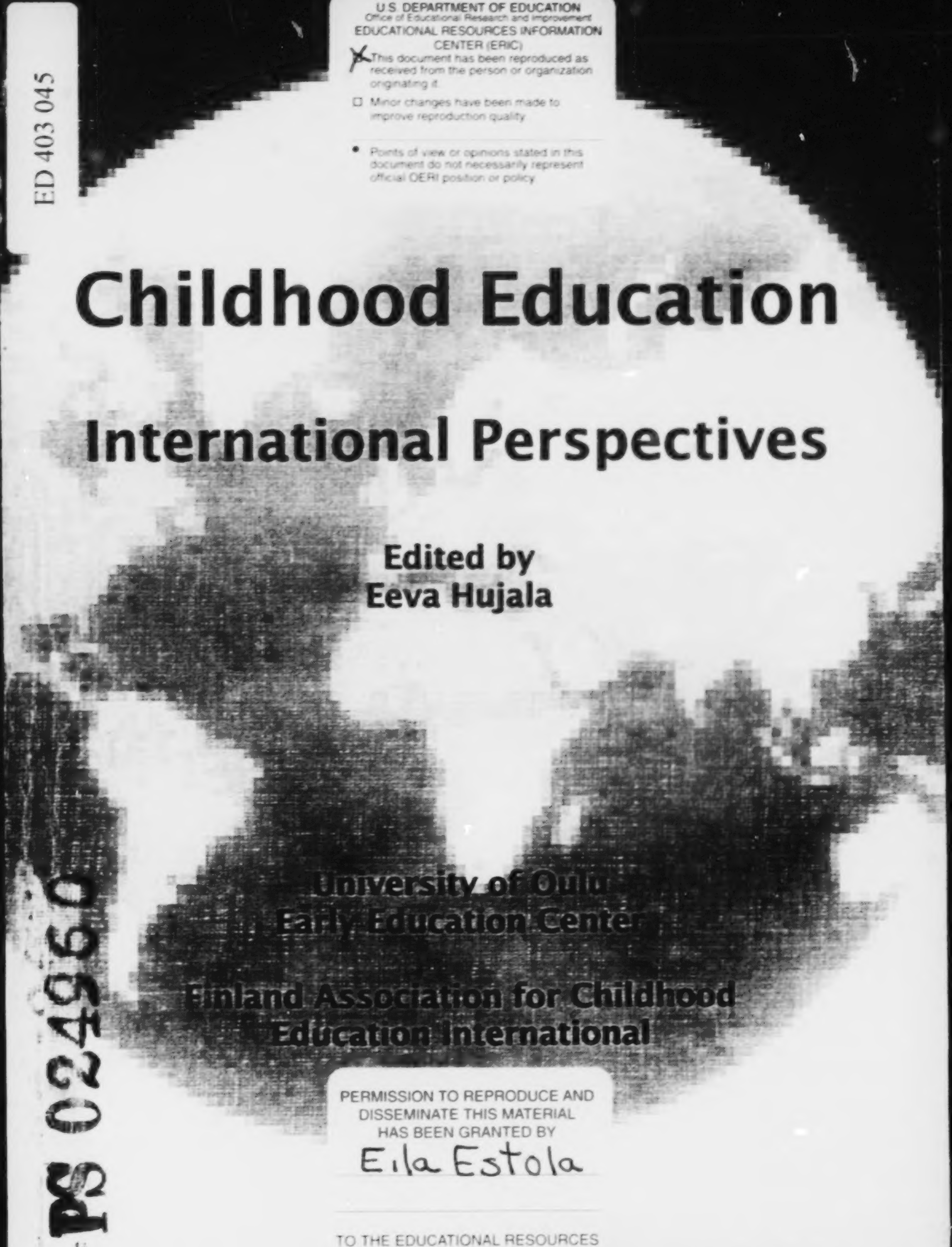

Childhood Education

International Perspectives

Edited by
Eeva Hujala

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Early Education Center

Finland Association for Childhood Education International

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PREFACE

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International issue

One of the most important challenges in education and teacher training is internationalisation and international co-operation. They put other cultures in perspective, and provide a better understanding of education and children's life in different societies. They also help to analyse our own culture more broadly and deeply than before. Research was made among educationalists in different parts of Europe to explore their ideas of international co-operation. According to the respondents, the most important thing in international co-operation was to exchange information about educational issues between different societies and to do international research. In fact, these two sectors always go hand in hand: comparative research requires exchange of information, and in exchanging information the recipient, for instance, always filters, analyses and explores the information about the other culture from the viewpoint of his own culture.

What then is international comparative research? We can say that all research is international, because science does not know any national boundaries. In the social sciences and in education, comparative research and international exchange of information help to find and analyse the cultural connections of growth. One of the most important challenges facing comparative educational and socialisation research is therefore to identify the cultural, social, economic and ecological factors which influence growth and development. Relatively little has been written about the methodology of comparative research in education. It has been surprising how little attention journals of comparative education have been giving to methodological questions, as their main interest has been on the social discussion of the research data. It is also an important viewpoint, of course, and one needed by modern pedagogy, but the development of cultural research requires solid consideration of its methodology.

The goal and contents of the monograph

The goal of this monograph is to introduce international perspectives into childhood education. The book is about the problems, challenges and reality of growth from early education to adult education and to the applications of teacher education both from the perspective of one culture and from a cross-cultural perspective. The book has its origin in the international conference which was held in Oulu, Finland. The conference was organised by the University of Oulu and Finland Association for Childhood Education International. These two organisations are also responsible for the publication of this book. One of the editorial goals has been to provide a broad cultural spectrum of topics. Another idea has been to consider issues from the viewpoints of both research and practice. The book comprises seven categories under which researchers, teachers and everyday educators write about their views on childhood education, its implementation, problems and challenges on the basis of their own research work and experiences.

Many of the articles in this book consider learning from the point of view of the socio-cultural context. The inclusion of the cultural context and the societal value system in childhood programmes and schools always makes education and teaching into something that is determined internally in a society. It is not, however, a good thing to copy educational models which arise from the reality of another society as such, because even though the models may be appropriate in one society, they will not be equally appropriate in the sociocultural context of another society. The value and significance of analysing the systems of another culture lies to a large extent in the fact that the evaluation and comparison of educational cultures helps educators to perceive the cultural connections of education, thus helping them to understand better their own models of action.

The significance of teacher education and the teacher, as promoters of growth in childhood and of learning, is also emphasised in many of the articles. Ecological awareness of education, or awareness of the cultural context of teaching and educational work, also emerges as a prerequisite for high-quality education and successful teaching. Ecological awareness of education involves both a solid theoretical awareness and consciousness of the socio-cultural connections.

In addition to the viewpoints of teachers and parents, many of the articles place emphasis on the child's point of view in education. The articles present new interesting strategies to improve the quality of childhood by viewing things more than before from the child's point of view.

All in all, the articles prove that education is bound to society, and that the different educational strategies rise from the society and culture in which they live.

Mission of the monograph

We all have lots of experiences about children and education on the micro level. We also know that to get a real understanding of the processes of child's growth, we have to understand the growth environment and how it interacts with the child. We know that there are a number of intermediating variables between the child and society. But it is often difficult to realise these connections, because we are so close to the setting around us. I think that interaction with people from different cultures opens our own eyes to see more. Knowing different cultures also gives us a point of reference to analyse our own system, its values, beliefs and norms.

In addition to the differences, education has a lot in common in different countries. For example, the teachers' concern about child-centredness and their efforts to promote active learning in classrooms as well as the quality of education and its funding are burning issues in educational discussions around the world. The implementation of these key issues in education is, however, dependent on the structure and the underlying values of each society.

This book provides a view of other cultures. I hope that it will also help to understand better education and children's life in different societies. Knowing the educational practices of different societies and their cross-cultural analysis gives us a deeper insight into our work as researchers, teachers and educators. By getting to know and understand other cultures I hope that we are in a better position to advance the welfare of children in our world. I think that understanding and acceptance of different cultures paves the way for a more peaceful world for our children.

I wish to thank all the writers for helping this book to have a broad orientation ranging from research to practice. I also thank the reviewers on the editorial board who read through all the articles and made suggestions for the publication. The criteria for selection in this publication have included the quality of the articles, international representation of writers and international appeal of the topics. I also want to express my gratitude to all the people who have been involved in different ways in the production of this publication and helped it to go to press.

Eeva Hujala

Childhood in a Changing Society

THE CENTURY OF THE CHILD, PART II: BACK TO THE FUTURE OR FORWARD TO THE PAST?[1]

Margareta Rönnberg
Uppsala, Sweden

In 1900, the Swedish writer and social debater Ellen Key published a book called *The century of the Child.* Ever since, the expression "the century of the child" has been a slogan all over Europe, not only in the field of child research. The title is borrowed from a drama from 1896 in which there is a line stating that "the next century will be the century of the child - like this one has been the century of the woman". Key here presents a list of all the changes she thinks are necessary in order to implement what's best for the children in the 20th century.

Let's look at those of Key's wishes that have come true so far, and let us also see if the remaining wishes still are what we want today, or if we - with the benefit of hindsight - now have a different view on these matters. So, let us compare childhood at the turn of the century with childhood of today. How far have we actually come?

First, among those things that we HAVE accomplished in Sweden, which naturally will be my test case, we can distinguish the following ones. Corporal punishment or caning in schools was finally forbidden by law in 1958. Parents also lost their "right" to give their children a beating in 1979. The Christian religion is no longer taught exclusively in schools, like it still was when I went to school. Today children learn about all religions equally. The freedom to choose school subjects more freely is just about to be introduced at all levels. Children are now playing more than ever before and the value of play is widely recognized.

However, there still remain issues to be realized if we are to believe in Ellen Key's visions of what is best for the children. Quite contrary to Key's hopes, day-care facilities or kindergartens have grown enormously in number, and all children over the age of 1 have a right by law to receive communal day-care. In 1950 only a very small percentage of children was enrolled in day-care, actually about the same as 1900.

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[1] Edited by Dr Harriet Strandell, University of Helsinki

Almost 90 percent of all mothers with small children are working outside the home. This is more than three times the amount of 1950. Thus neither women nor children have been brought back into the home, which Key hoped most of all. Consequently, home education has not replaced either the pre-schools or the lower stages of the comprehensive school. Today, very few people in Sweden even wish for these changes actually to take place.

In the childhood of today there are new dark clouds over the heads of children that were not current issues in the days of Ellen Key or even in 1950:

Parents and teachers in the 1950's, and grown-ups in general, were a kind of volunteer policemen. Children were taught to obey and be polite. Parents of today are a kind of amateur psychologists who want to give children "freedom under responsibility". We have today a totally different view on obedience.

200 000 are children of immigrants, who actually are poorly integrated in the Swedish society, or total outsiders. Today two thirds of all young people live in suburbs which did not even exist in 1950. This means that we have a totally new kind of, often very large scale and anonymous, living surrounding, where the young are at the same time invisible and much more visible, but treated as a group instead of as individuals.

200 000 children and teenagers in Sweden are children of drug users. That means that they, maybe already at the age of three, have cut off their feelings and find it extremely difficult to trust anybody. Surely there were alcoholics in 1900 and in 1950 but very few drug addicts.

Parents have become "time robbers". Since 1950, 40 hours weekly of shared time - or at least the presence of their parents - have been stolen from children. The German writer Michael Ende has written a wonderful book about time robbers (Momo). An American has named TV the giant time robber but the real time robbers in the lives of today's children are undeniably their parents. Due to longer compulsory school attendance, teachers also pinch a couple of years more from their pupils' lives. And although parents steal time from their children, they still have too little time: 15 years ago adults in Sweden had 25 hours of free time each week, today they say they have 10 hours... As a compensation for their parents' time, children now receive time from institutional adults at day-care centres, schools, recreational and play centres, sports and television. But TV and videos taken together fill no more than two hours a day of Swedish children's lost time, contrary to what you might think.

Actually, the role of modern mass media in those changes that have taken place in the lives of children since the turn of the century (or even since the 1950's when I was a child) is quite modest.

Today's children indeed lead a different kind of life than children did only 30 or 40 or 50 years ago. Above all, they live a more "public" childhood: more institutions, more media, more commercial supply - quite simply a less isolated "family childhood". Today's children have greater freedom to choose their cultural products, and they spend more time than ever before under the influence of institutions outside the family. As I see it, professionals in the public child care system and in schools work in the same sphere as the mass media do, and with the same goal: to counter the child's segregation and isolation in the family, to support the children in their emancipation, in their identity work and their capacity to understand themselves and others. Actually, I think that the closed family unit is the most dangerous social institution there has ever been: how much physical and psychic abuse has not taken place in the family under the disguise of upbringing? The home is, however, still the most dangerous place to be in both for women and for children. We should indeed idealise neither the family nor the past...

The conditions of children's lives have changed so profoundly that it can be called into question whether the ideals of "The century of the Child" have any relevance at all when discussing the childhood of today.

From dependence to participation

Was life then better for children in the "good old days"? Absolutely not! We can find evidence of this in the changing ideas as to what constitutes a child and what childhood actually means. Do we mean the same thing today by childhood as people did a hundred years ago? Traditionally childhood has meant four things: dependence (economic as well as emotional), protection, irresponsibility and segregation. Today, children are just as dependent on adults as they were 100 years ago but less dependent on their parents and more dependent on other adults around them - which I consider a positive development. Today's children are more protected and supervised than children have ever been but less irresponsible and less mentally segregated - even though they are physically kept more apart from e.g. adult workplaces. A hundred, or even fifty years ago, children were of course less physically separated from the adult world but in terms of knowledge and psychology they were outsiders and treated as more unequal. Above all the mass media have, in a mostly positive manner, influenced the way children have entered into the adult mental world - regardless of what Mr. Postman would like to say about media making childhood disappear (Postman 1985).

The fact that children are regarded as less irresponsible and more equal is partly a result of the independent adults' wish to see them that way: it eases the parents' bad conscience when their children are left in day-care or alone. But children also know a lot more today and are capable of coping with much more than ever before. Karin M Ekström has in a recent study (1995) shown how Swedish children and teenagers are allowed to participate in deciding family buying: the children are called upon to decide purchase of half of all the capital goods and two thirds of all daily products. This is partially a form of work sharing when hard working and tired parents gladly let their children decide what the family is going to have for dinner or what kind of detergent to buy.

Nowadays children are also very well-informed and aware of environmental issues. They are not just influenced by TV commercials but also critical and sceptical towards all attempts to persuade or con us. School children are also the family experts on the latest technology like computers, TV, videos, stereos, microwave ovens, etc., and therefore know what buys are the best. Parents also regard this purchasing as a question of family democracy, as education and something that strengthens their children's self reliance and feelings of responsibility and participation.

Childhood is being here and now!

Definitions of "child" and "childhood" are historically specific, just like definitions of "adults" and "adulthood". However, we get the paradox that when adults look at children from **their own adult** point of view, children are seen as relatively similar to the adults themselves (especially if this is in accordance with the adult's own interests, e.g. work). However, when we adults look at children and children's culture from **the children's** point of view, we see them basically as very different and distant from ourselves. This has to do with what we, at the moment, value most: when we regard children as FUTURE ADULTS, we believe that work, independence, self reliance, participation in social life and responsibility are BETTER qualities than unproductive time, dependence, poor self esteem, isolation or lack of responsibility. The working adult sees life in a day-care centre as the equivalent of participation in societal work, as practicing responsibility and independence - a kind of children's model of productive work.

When adults evaluate leisure and cultural activities, however, these issues are turned upside-down: those qualities that have no outlets in the workday, like playfulness, creativity and irresponsibility, are now supposed to be compensated for - or nostalgically dreamed about. The truth is, however, that the adult spare time after a hard day's work actually is not very active. Through the magic formula of the "child within", adults succeed though at stealing for themselves the best things from both worlds: you think you are both the independent, active, contributing adult and deep inside the imaginative and creative "child"... The fact that you yourself as a child **also** were dependent, powerless, protected, segregated and irresponsible, is now easily forgotten. And you think that the children beside you on the sofa watching TV are terribly passive and unimaginative, and they have not even worked all day as you have been doing...

Imagination, freedom, playfulness, creativity - allegedly qualities belonging uniquely to childhood and culture - are undeniably valued HIGHER than adult routines, formalities, overseriousness and lack of imagination. For some reason, "children's culture" always represents THE CHILD AS A NOW EXISTING CHILD, as being instead of becoming, while education and pedagogy see children as future adults. It all has to do with what we regard as the object of comparison. In the previous case, when we look at things from our own adult perspective, we compare **ourselves now** with our **children as future adults**.

From the perspective of the child and that of children's culture (or childhood in an extremely abstract sense), however, we make comparisons between the time **when we were children** and that of the **children of today** - no longer between today's adults and today's children. In addition, we are not even seeing things clearly. If we were, we would acknowledge, for example, that adult free time after a tiring workday is actually rather passive. We would also understand that if the child has already "worked" in the day-care centre among 40-50 other children for 7-9 hours, she/he must really be much more tired than the child of the 1950's who only had one or two brothers or sisters to play with. We would also realize that the child still is powerless and dependent on us. In other words we would become aware of the child's rather **different** position as compared to us adults both now and during the time when we were children.

I am not saying that today's children are worse off than children 50 or 100 years ago, only that they grow up in a more complicated and demanding world, and seem to manage surprisingly well in it. Above all children today have to create an identity for themselves more on their own, make a synthesis of many more roles, reality factors, and role models: this is one of the things that they use TV for. They are quite simply working extremely hard even when they seem to be most passive.

One sign of the changing notion of childhood is undeniably the enormous growth of cultural products directly tailored to suit children. Ellen Key made a list of recommended reading, of which almost nothing was tempting to a child under 12. Today, there is an abundance of offerings, especially adapted for each age group, containing notably less violence than the adult culture in which children could participate at the turn of the century when products especially adapted for children were almost non-existent.

Behind the demands for quality in children's culture produced by adults is, however always the idea of **development**. According to adult educators, cultural products for children should be directed towards the future. They should function as preparation for life. It is not a question anymore of "preserving childhood" but of enabling the child to "develop" and with the help of education reach the status of adult as quickly as possible. Mary Ellen Goodman (1970), a cultural anthropologist, defines quite clearly culture as "skills, abilities, habits and attitudes that are necessary if the child later on as an adult will be able to manage to live in the world...". But how on earth is the child going to manage until then? How can a child endure being small, powerless, irresponsible and supposedly ignorant NOW? The criticised, so-called trivial, rehabilitating products of children's culture are invaluable here, as I see it. According to the children themselves, children's culture is life - not some preparation for it!

While children's culture produced by adults, like all other upbringing, has as its goal to make the children reach the highest stage (adulthood) as soon as possible, there is, however, one area left out of this acceleration process: the so-called children's own culture is supposed to keep children in childhood as long as possible. Children should be playful, innocent, draw imaginatively, play with cones etc., preferably till they get a job. WHY they should do that, remains unclear, though: probably because then as adults they will have something to have nostalgic memories of. Or perhaps it is understood to be a necessary safety outlet.

Children are always expected to be very "imaginative" but as a matter of fact especially children below two and between the ages of 5-11 need things or other influences to get their fantasy or daydreaming going - for example TV-programmes or toys. These things do not kill - on the contary they stimulate - the children's fantasy. Children do not simply play out TV manuscripts. The media offer children new kinds of ideas to be integrated into old play and games. The media do not, however, create new forms of play - they just modernise them. The effects of the media are noticeable on play only if the new ideas can be adapted to traditional forms of play like House, Dressing up, Ghosts, chase and attack, etc. The media enrich traditional play and give old games new names. This kind of labelling does not really change traditional play activities but the game of Ghosts of course becomes more thrilling with film monsters; Roxette and Madonna replace the circus games or playing at Princess; He-Man, Skeletor, Ninja Turtles and The Lion King stand in for old heroes, like Cops and Robbers, Soldiers and Cowboys and Indians.

Facts and fiction about violence in children's culture

Children's culture, regardless of how we define it, was definitely not better - or less violent - 100 years ago. Evidence suggests that, for example, children's free play was much more violent in the 1840's than in the 1950's or even today (Sutton-Smith 1981). Ellen Key made propaganda for more freedom and more play in the lives of young children. Today children actually play more than ever but are also more supervised. Therefore, adults are aware of and notice children's brutalities which formerly belonged to a closed childhood world. Today's adults try to control children's play to a much greater extent than for instance in the beginning of 1950's when there was still hardly any interference at all. Nowadays we have teachers in school yards during breaks to keep an eye on the children's play. The solution for children is an "interiorized type of play" in the form of watching TV as a way to escape adult control. This means that they are also playing in psychological space instead of only physical space like earlier generations. But children of all times have always loved powerful roles and role reversals between small and big, powerful and powerless, strong and weak, and that is what TV-programmes are still about.

But what about the violence on TV?! Most of the Turtle games (like the He-Man-games before them) that I have observed in day-care centres and recreational centres have not been physically violent. The actions are only symbolical, verbal and above all noisy, with "sound effects" and phrases taken directly from the TV series. If you look closely enough, you can see that the boys' media games most of the time do not include any physical contact whatsoever. If they do, it is unintentional: they only intend to simulate hits, kicks, shootings or sword battles. A few socially disturbed boys can also fight for real in these games, accompanied by a strong dislike and scolding from the rest of the boys. In every respect the conflict games inspired by the media are among the least physically aggressive, most collaborative and most enjoyable games for preschool boys. The violent content is in stark contrast to the friendly and co-operative interaction.

Let me also quote Barthelmes et al. (1991) and their conclusions from the largest research ever done of day-care centres and children's games in relation to the media. They conclude that the conflicts originate in the social constellation, not in the patterns of the media: "According to our observations the actual aggression has nothing to do with the media." (ibid., 267) "In some cases the symbolically expressed aggressions are rather evidence of the child's ability to playfully control real conflicts and frustrations: they harm themselves and play "Revenge", they become frustrated because of the personnel or other children and they play "Shooting" them, instead of really hitting them. This means that the children transfer the real conflict over to the level of play and thus make it possible for both sides to find a way out the situation." (ibid., 267) Consequently, it is possible to conclude that media violence, rather than INCREASE REAL violence, can LESSEN the aggressions in the day-care centres.

Evidence suggests that the fairy tales that children heard in the earlier centuries were much more violent, more racist and more sexist than the ones TV provides them with today. Never before has children's culture in general been so well adapted to the child and so rebellious - but free from violence - as it is today. It is a matter of idealisation, nostalgia and self deception when the heroes of the folk tales are defended with arguments such as their use of cunning instead of violence: a renewed acquaintance with the main figures in the Grimm brothers folk and fairy tales is recommended, as well as with those in Mother Goose tales, or the Norwegian collections by Asbjörsen and Moe. In those stories people get killed or injured much more frequently than in today's TV products directed at children, where the only ones that "die" are the robots.

A content analysis of 200 traditional stories in Perrault's Mother Goose tales (from 1697) shows that they contained much worse cruelties than today's TV-stories for children. Among other things, the following (abbreviated) list could be arranged: 12 cases of cruelties towards people or animals, 9 cases where children are abandoned or lost, 7 cases of parts of bodies being cut off, 5 cases of threats to kill, 2 cases of choking to death, 1 case of devouring a human being, 1 case of a person being cut in two, 1 case of throat cutting, 1 death caused by squeezing, 1 case where the victim is cooked to death. (Handley-Taylor 1957). And this in one single tale collection! The Grimm Brothers' tales are not much better, containing detailed descriptions of murder, injuries, child murder and cannibalism: which child is not familiar with Little Red Riding Hood, Hansel and Gretel, Bluebeard and Three little pigs? And is it really more humane to lure, through cunning, a giant troll to commit suicide like the Norwegian Espen Askeladden did in the famous eating contest?

The old traditional fairy tales were of course not directly meant for children's ears but children were, however, unprotected listeners. At least during the last hundred years we have had products especially adapted for children. Today TV and computers are the foremost toys (and educational material) for children. TV is criticised for being dominated by adults, in contrast to play. Never before, however, has play been so associated with adult pedagogical, therapeutic or economic interests as it is today. This goes for all areas of children's culture: theatre, books and toys. It is paradoxical that the supply of toys has never been larger, at the same time as grown-ups are complaining that children do not know how to play anymore. The adults of course are comparing with the "correct" forms of plays from their own childhood.

However, play changes constantly along with prevailing techniques: in those days there was no TV, no computers, skateboards, roller-blades, street tennis, nor mountain bikes. When the part played by fathers in the lives of their children has become bigger, the so called "garbage" or trivial culture (dominated by pictures like comics, films, TV and sports) has increased as well. Computers and computer games also represent a "male" step away from the written, female wor(l)d. These are only a few examples of how men invade the cultural spheres that have traditionally been occupied by mothers and women. The boys appreciate this enormously.

Girls are not allowed to have much fun, though. Traditionally women have had the responsibility for education and mothers function as responsible bosses when it comes to the upbringing of children, supported by competent girls as subordinates or foremen. In the eyes of the pre-schoolers women are persons with enormous power, who take girls as their obedient allies to help them in the upbringing of the more difficult boys. Women are therefore also surprisingly obedient. This goes hand in hand with the fact that girls already from pre-school age have learnt to suppress their natural rebellious spirit and child perspectives. Girls are treated as helping hands not only by mothers but also by personnel in the day-care centres and by school teachers in order to make their work possible.

Girls are not equally "rewarded" in day-care centres or in school for their jokes or their mischief but are trained to suppress this legitimate form of rebelliousness - to crush the motivated resistance of the powerless. Instead women encourage the girls' serious, responsible "adult" behaviour. I find it only natural, however, that all suppressed groups need their own resistance culture. Now boys alone have this burden on their shoulders. No wonder that boys do not want to watch programmes on children's TV with girls in the main roles. The boy figures are without doubt more independent and more rebellious - not just more violent. For girls, the sex of the main figure is not important. But what happens, really, to their aggression and their rebelliousness?!

A user perspective on cultural products

Upbringing, education and recommendations concerning children's culture have always deep down been based on power relations in which the child is forced to surrender to the values of the adult. Normally, evaluations of children's culture are made by those who do not themselves use the products in question. For me, the only acceptable criterion of quality is quite simply that "good culture" is that product which the user finds good use for. The essential question is: Cannot we grown-ups cope with the fact that there are areas outside our adult power circle? Are we not safe and secure enough for this? Usually, children's culture is judged by those who do not even know the products themselves but still want to replace them with future-oriented "good alternatives". It is otherwise normal for a subculture to maintain and protect the group's own identity but the so called quality culture for children produced by adults tries to lead children away from their present-day identity. There is a total lack of interest in how children use their cultural products for their own competing purposes. The adults of course mean well: like all powerful elites, they work for a "noble cause". They are just unable to see children's culture from the child's own perspective.

A cultural judgement is most of the time only another attempt to exercise power, often with good intentions: power between generations, between social classes and between the sexes, an attempt to educate, to transfer one's own perspectives, views, values and interests onto others. The essential question is whose perspective you are taking, from what point of view you are looking at the cultural products: if you look at them from your own perspective or from the perspective of those whom the product is aimed at, if you want to CHANGE others or UNDERSTAND them. Does everything have to be education - ALL cultural products? Can't there be one area left outside education, a free space where children and teenagers are allowed to react, for example, to our upbringing?

If you as an adult see cultural products or cultural experiences from the child's perspective, or as a well educated academic from the perspective of a worker with very little education, or as a woman from a man's perspective, you can gain new insights. If you have the attitude that you are interested in finding out what the cultural products mean to the user, how the user interprets them, you will soon find that people that are different from yourself also understand for example films differently than you do: they see totally different things, they do not notice the things that you concentrate on, they see things in the film that you think are not even there, they "misinterpret" in accordance with their hopes and needs. If you have understood that people interpret and value narratives differently, you will also realize that your own ideas about how for example a certain film "influences" the receiver need not apply to any one but yourself. Different interpretations are likely to result in different "effects".

But because most adults do not have the time to learn more about, even less control, what children actually do, they associate today's childhood with commercialism, TV and ready-made toys. These are regarded as the epitome of "passivity" - not realizing how complicated media narratives are or how active and creative the child's reception, analysis and reworking of TV contents in play actually is. In a word: grown ups can no longer recognize "childhood" - i.e. they cannot recognize their own childhood. Therefore something must have gone wrong: all children are supposed to be free, imaginative and irresponsible - at least after "work" in the day-care centre. "Passivity" in children is the worst thing that adults know of, at the same time as those very same adults can hardly bear how unbelievably active these children usually are.

Children and adults also live in the same worlds

In this respect ideas and ideals about children's culture can be "dangerous", separating adults from children and "children of yesterday" from "children of today" for all the wrong reasons. There is a risk in the traditional way of focusing only on those things that are thought to separate children from adults, not noticing everything we have in common. Seeing children and adults as each other's opposites only leads to nostalgia for one's own lost childhood and to ignorance about children's own cultural choices and situation here and now. Like feminist research, which has to rediscover masculinity, "childist" research must rediscover adults.

As I said earlier, childhood has traditionally meant four inter-woven things: dependence, protection, segregation, irresponsibility. These phenomena are not all of them positive: in all four we can find advantages as well as disadvantages. "Childhood" has meant balancing between privileges and restrictions: the child has had to give up quite a lot of freedom in order to become "privileged". To be an adult also means privileges as well as restrictions, and these restrictions often give rise to fantasies about "the child within". However, grown-ups only want to acknowledge the "positive" child-like qualities within: vulnerability, curiosity, creativity. The allegedly "negative" qualities such as a longing for protection and care, or dependence and lack of independence are rejected. As grown-ups we do not want to acknowledge the adult segregation from the world of children, our longing for irresponsibility in the disguise of drunkenness, with the help of drugs, exhausting dance or sexual activities. Neither do we want to acknowledge our subservient powerlessness and child status when confronted by responsible bosses of various kinds - resulting in suppressed rebelliousness. If we adults would dare to admit also our own "negative" child-like aspects, we would be able to show a greater understanding also when it comes to children's own preferences as regards cultural products such as films, TV-programmes and comics.

Grown up men have been equally segregated, e.g. at work and leisure, and emotionally dependent on the family, especially on the wife. They have been protected from problems and worries about children and grandparents, quite simply irresponsible and childlike with a bottle in their mouth. For a long time women have been economically dependent on men and segregated to women's salons or the benches around the sand box. Today women increasingly relieve men of their economic responsibility but still want to be protected by men and, together with the children, enter the life boats first. Most women also expect men to do the killing for them and heroically die for the sake of women and children. A weak woman undeniably creates a "strong" man. Many women are also emotionally dependent on their children, some of them even on their husbands, and dependent on men when it comes to practical tasks such as nailing and repairing the car. Day-care centres and schools are regarded as segregated ghettos, but so is The Stock Exchange in Stockholm, the Mine in Kiruna, and many places of work dominated by women, e.g. in hospitals.

Segregation of one category automatically means segregation of other categories. Most men have spent, and are still spending, their day segregated from children, and today the number of women doing the same thing is increasing. We come to the conclusion that children and adults, men and women are more similar than dissimilar. They are only similar in somewhat different areas.

The idea that children and adults are each other's opposites has actually given rise to a backlash during the past few decades. Until the 1960's the Century of the Child was an undeniable fact but since then we can actually talk about the "Decades of the Mother". Between 1880-1960 the child's needs ideally always came first. Children were paid a lot of attention, not only by Dr. Spock and other hand books on child care. A number of different developmental stages were discovered while the problems of parenthood (then = motherhood) were neglected. Children were protected from everything considered adult and "unsound": naked people were not allowed to appear in films, alcoholic fathers or divorces could not be portrayed in children's books, single parents were a shame and common-law marriages unacceptable. Children's exceptional behaviour was tolerated though: unruly boys were not right away taken to the psychologist but were expected to "grow out of it". The Child was the ideal: innocent, creative, imaginative, playful and full of possibilities. Soon the adults began to want to copy them and to be youngish and downright childish themselves.

However, The Golden Age of Childhood is over now: to devote your life completely to others is no longer feasible. Women demanded a life of their own. Now it is "in" to be "adult", though still of course with the best "child qualities" "within" your adult self. Today, the range of normality is notably smaller for children and nowadays no exceptions to "right" behaviour are allowed, or the child is sent to see the child psychologist. Tolerance for adult "perversions", however, is much greater today: families are not held together anymore "for the sake of the children". Now parents are often adviced to get a divorce, single parents are acceptable, homosexuality is OK and should not even be an obstacle for adoption. There used to be no stages for adulthood, now we have many developmental stages for adults: thirty-something, 40-year-crisis, menopause (for BOTH sexes!), grey panthers, third agers, etc. While Freud regarded the interest to look at genitals as a characteristic of the pre-oedipal child, today's adult society shows an increased interest in watching pornography, which the adults at the same time try to protect their children from... The tables are indeed turned! (I am indebted to David Elkind's talk in Finland a couple of years ago for some of these ideas.)

However, this backlash has also brought something good with it since fathers have increasingly entered their children's lives, which makes for a new beginning when it comes to relations between children and adults. Fortunately men are more playful with their children, more child-like, less forbidding and more equal. This might counter the negative effects brought about by the view of children and adults as opposites, leading to artificial acceleration of children's intellectual development, to denial or suppression of the allegedly negative child-like qualities in adults, such as day dreams and quiet, imaginal dialogues with others "inside you", and fantasies about revenge and escape. We often hear slogans about "Childhood Preservation". The question is however, instead of just "preserving childhood", which parts are actually worth preserving and strengthening - and which ones should rather be combatted in children as well as in adults. It cannot be recommended to perpetuate qualities like subordination, obedience, powerlessness, irresponsibility, supervision or control. For the most part, childhood still means powerlessness and irresponsibility and in **that** respect children would welcome the disappearance of childhood. Hand in hand with powerlessness goes a tendency to put the blame on others. On the other hand, dependence on others can in some cases be something positive.

Another disadvantage, as a consequence of separating childhood from adulthood, is the discouraging effect that psychoanalysis has on us, insisting that all our present problems are due to our difficulties in childhood - NOT to the fact that we are having problems NOW at work e. g. and need to change our present situation. Perhaps we, although adults, feel that we are simply treated like children? It is time not only to demand more respect on the part of adults for children's own choices and preferences but also better adult recognition of their own positive as well as negative child-like qualities and positions.

Above all, we must stop seeing children and adults as each other's opposites, as beginning and end, down and up. How can we be sure that we grow up and not down? Why not like a roller-coaster? Opposites have only two directions, either-or: child or adult, man or woman, good or bad. The ways of thinking and social control that we are exposed to as children, unfortunately also characterize our adult experiences. "Child-and-parent" is the model for most of our complementary, unequal social relations. Here I am thinking of relations like husband-wife, teacher-pupil, employer-employee, person living in the capital-person living way up north, doctor-patient, researcher- object of research. There is constant interaction between controller and controlled, up and down. Even as adults we waver between different types of child and parent roles. One part of a parent's role is to be rational, respectable, serious, responsible, not to be loud, noisy or fond of amusement. In more intimate relations with men, women often use the special kind of control that we can call the parent model and men are either obedient children or child rebels. Women sometimes see men as little boys, whom they have to keep an eye on: Boys will be boys... Women e g take a tolerant parent role towards men's drinking, because alcohol reminds us of children's play, of joking and resistant mass culture. To go to the pub is like going out to play. Now the wife-mother reacts with weaker control and the half drunk adult manchild is allowed to break many rules, compared to when sober. Today we see obedient children almost solely amongst adults, especially in places of work. Adults become obedient, ingratiating, hypocritical children in their relations to their "parents", their bosses and superiors. They sell their independence for comfortable security and a pat on the shoulder.

Instead of focusing on the supposedly opposite child-adult and child-parent roles, we women that dominate the child-care and educational professions should, in my opinion, emphasize more the relation we can call "SIBLING-HOOD" (a word that hardly exists) or SISTERHOOD. We are all sisters in that we sometimes wish both to be taken care of by parents and be irresponsible, at the same time as we compete and want to exercise power over brothers and sisters as well as parents. We want both to be small and to seem adult. For adults these "parents" can consist of other adults or of social safety nets. We remain sisters throughout our lives even though we change from children into adults. But siblinghood or sisterhood resembles more a seesaw that swings up and down, than a ladder that you have to climb, racing after those inevitably ahead of you. Sisters can develop at different speeds, they are constantly transformed side by side, one of them can grow taller than the other, though the other can later catch up with the first one, and so on. Sisters are constantly changing in a more parallel way. Their perspectives are much more alike. Instead of becoming little mothers, girls should be allowed to really be sisters... Sometimes big sisters, sometimes little sisters. This change, of course, would be easier with an equally shared parenthood .

If we, in the future, were to look at each other more as sisters - regardless of differences in age and sex - this would automatically have a positive effect on children's culture also. We would get less "fatherly" and more sisterly types of heroes in children's play, on TV, in films and books - as well as in the work places of adults. We would, like Mark Gerzon suggests (1984) give up old - male-defined - public heroes like the Pioneer and the Soldier, who both are based on a man's denial of dependence and fear. We would exchange private heroes like the Male Family Provider and the Female Home Expert for more equal and bisexual heroes. Instead of the Pioneer, who alone conquers the land and tames the forest, we would have the Healer, who dedicates his life to healing the wounds that the Pioneer has caused the earth. Instead of the Soldier, who protects women and children by misusing his own body in order to defend them, we would have the Mediator, who is able to hear opposite voices and views and understand "the enemy" because he/she understands himself/herself from the inside, rather than projects all evil onto others - something that especially women today often have a tendency to do. Instead of the Family Provider and the Self-sacrificing Mother, we would have the Friend who shares work, family and spare time. Instead of the Expert (on care, economy, politics or whatever), we would have the Colleague - at home as well as at work.

If we were to acknowledge both the positive and the negative child-like qualities in ourselves AS ADULTS, we would realise that WE are also here and now, not somewhere in the past (like psychoanalysis claims) or in the future (immortalised by our children). Then we could stop longing for our own childhood and REALLY SEE THE CHILDREN around us - instead of turning our eyes inwards, towards some imagined space inside us. My answer to the question "Back to the Future or Forward to the Past?" is then: Let us all live in the here and NOW!

Therefore: let the next century be the "century of the sibling" - "The century of brothers and sisters", regardless of age!

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IS IT POSSIBLE TO IMPROVE TOLERANCE AMONG ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDREN? THE GOOD WILL CLASSROOM EXAMPLE

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As an answer to the question in the title of this presentation, *The Good Will Classroom* has been developed by school psychologists of the Group MOST[1], as an intervention program aiming to improve tolerance among the school population in Serbia. The highly complex context in which children develop in this country is difficult to define, but at least schematically it could be outlined in terms of several most pronounced agents influencing the child's psychological development. Alongside the background of patriarchal and communist authoritarian mentality, new influence-bearing elements have emerged: the war and economic collapse, which strongly contribute to the totally unfavorable situation experienced by children.

It would take much more space than is available to explain the particular influences of all the listed elements of the context of child development. Research findings gathered during 1991-92 in Belgrade and other Serbian towns have already shown the effects in the behavior of preschool and school children[2], which only worsened in later years. In the everyday lives and

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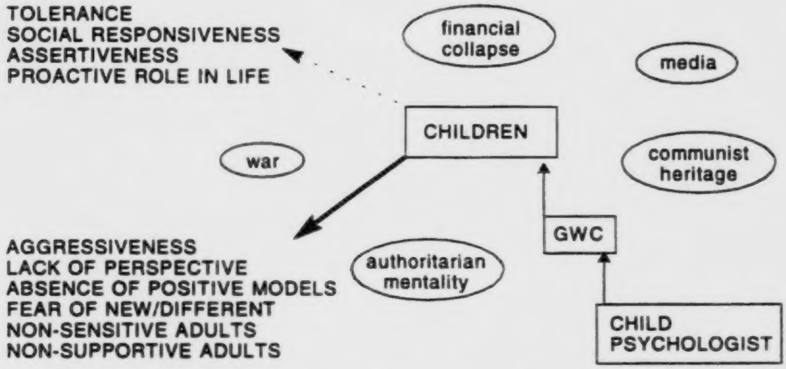
[1] Group MOST is the association of school psychologists trained for mediation, negotiation and non-violent conflict resolution, a collective member of the Center for Antiwar Action. Address: Kralja Petra 46, 11000 Belgrade, Yugoslavia.

[2] In the Serbian language published in: *Psiholoska istrazivanja* no 6 (Belgrade: Institut for Psychology, University of Belgrade). It contains articles on children conceptions of the war (Vesna Ognjenovic), on the preschool teachers' competences in dealing with new children's experiences (Smiljka Ivackovic), on the presence of the war in school children everyday lives


TOLERANCE
SOCIAL RESPONSIVENESS
ASSERTIVENESS
PROACTIVE ROLE IN LIFE
financial collapse
media
CHILDREN
war
communist heritage
GWC
AGGRESSIVENESS
LACK OF PERSPECTIVE
ABSENCE OF POSITIVE MODELS
FEAR OF NEW/DIFFERENT
NON-SENSITIVE ADULTS
NON-SUPPORTIVE ADULTS
authoritarian mentality
CHILD PSYCHOLOGIST

activities of the children it is evident that the war is present as an experience of threat, pain, fear, loss - hard to cope with, to understand or explain. The financial collapse of the country adds a devastated environment (with a lack of smiles, warmth, books, toys, even proper food), and almost the only available media - TV - just highlights further the unfavorable influences. The combined effects of the listed agents on child behavior could be summarized as supporting tendencies to higher aggressiveness, lack of perspective, absence of positive models and fear of new/different/change in children growing up with presently not-sensitive-enough, not-supportive-enough adults.

The strategy

The change we want to introduce with the intervention program called *The Good Will Classroom (GWC)*, and thus break this vicious circle, aims at the promotion and support of tolerance, social responsiveness, assertiveness and a proactive role in life. These general aims of the GWC program are more precisely defined as the promotion of the following program's target areas (see diagram 2): self-awareness and self-reflection, communication skills, personal strategies in favor of socially responsive behavior, and the change of attitudes toward conflicts.

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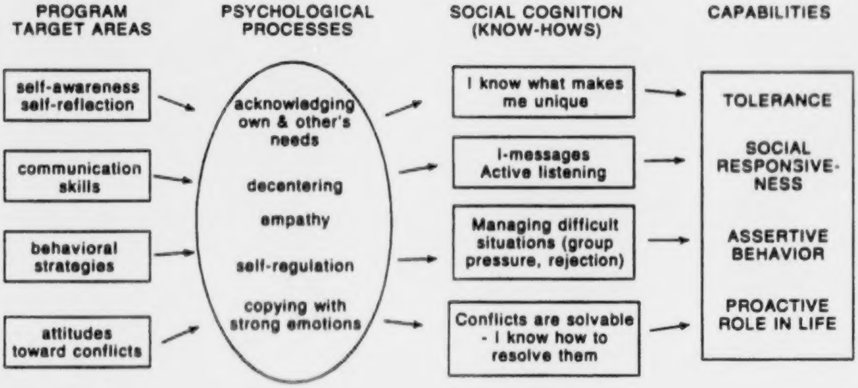
and activities (Nada Korac), and on the adaptation of the refugee children to the new school setting (Danijela Petrovic). The overview of these results can be seen in English in: Ruzica Rosandic. "The Legacy of War and Children". NIRA Review (Japan). Special issue: Summer 1995, pp. 46-49.


PROGRAM TARGET AREAS
PSYCHOLOGICAL PROCESSES
SOCIAL COGNITION (KNOW-HOWS)
CAPABILITIES
self-awareness self-reflection
communication skills
behavioral strategies
attitudes toward conflicts
acknowledging own & other's needs
decentering
empathy
self-regulation
copying with strong emotions
I know what makes me unique
I-messages Active listening
Managing difficult situations (group pressure, rejection)
Conflicts are solvable - I know how to resolve them
TOLERANCE
SOCIAL RESPONSIVE-NESS
ASSERTIVE BEHAVIOR
PROACTIVE ROLE IN LIFE

In order to elevate these target areas to the level of social knowledge, in order to transform them into "know-how" behavioral tools, and finally into personal capabilities, we consider it necessary to elaborate them indirectly, via certain relevant psychological processes. In the above diagram these processes are listed within the circle. Our strategy for achieving such a transformation was to improve the processes of cognitive and socio-emotional decentering, self-regulatory processes, acknowledgement of one's own and others' needs, empathy, and coping with strong emotions such as hate, rage, fear or pain.

The general form of intervention was the *experiential workshop*. With the term "experiential", used in similar programs[3], we stress the fact that the contents of this type of educational workshops rely on children's everyday experience relevant to the selected themes. For example, GWC largely concentrates on developing and improving the ability to decenter. So, in many workshops children can experience and exchange experiences from different everyday situations where they have to put themselves "into other's shoes", to acknowledge other's needs, emotions, attitudes. For example, children make pairs, and one in a pair child A gets a note on which is written what he/she did to the other child B; it can be something pleasant ("You shared your chocolate with your pair"), or unpleasant ("By accident you spilled water on your pair's drawing"). Child A has the task of making a "sculpture" of child B, which expresses the feelings of B provoked by what A did to him/her (of course, the "sculptured" child does not know in advance what he/she is supposed to express). After that, the note is read aloud, and B can make necessary changes in his/her own posture, and exchange that experience with his/her pair (and with other children in the group, too).

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[3] For example: Kinshasha Nia-Azariah, Frances Kern-Ctotty, Louise Gomer Bangel (1992). A Year of SCRC: 35 Experiential Workshops for Classroom. Cincinnati, Oh: Center for Peace Education.

Through such contents of relevant everyday experience a child can acknowledge what makes him/her different from and similar to others concerning preferences, habits, abilities, feelings. In this way, he/she gets an insight into different levels and kinds of similarities and dissimilarities among persons, which are the grounds of individuality. The possibility to experience the individuality of another person helps a child become more conscious of his/her own individuality. For example, a child is gradually involved into situations in which she/he can see what she/he has in common with other children, what makes her/him different, in order to acknowledge it and verbally express it: "Like Marko, I prefer winter of all the seasons, but we are different because Marko likes math, and I do not, and in that I am similar to Jasna..."

In a corresponding way children simulate typical conflict situations, which help them to experience the emotions and needs of different persons involved in conflict. For example, the instructor reads some well-known story to the children (e.s. "Snow White"), but not in the usual manner: the known story is told from the standpoints of other persons - the stepmother's, the two step-sisters', the father's... The basic idea of such an experience is to make children look for the differences in the experiences of different actors in the same situation, to acknowledge that one solution to some problem could not be equally satisfying to all the involved parties. Or, on the same theme of conflicts, the work is organized so that pairs of children get only a partially drawn and textless comic-strip about two children in a quarrel, and they have to finish it, drawing the starting scene and the final one, as well as to write down in the "clouds" what the actors are saying to each other aloud and what they think/feel "in themselves". This helps children realize the uneasiness of the incongruence of overt and covert behavior. Further, it helps them acknowledge the different interests, feelings, attitudes arising from the dynamics of the conflict and of its various outcomes; this helps them become able and willing to *redefine* a conflict situation (to stop looking at it as a non choice situation) and look for a solution which could satisfy both conflicting sides.

Such workshops also support the child's empathy and help the articulation of the "language of needs". The same theme of conflicts can be worked out in the form of role play, so that an unfinished story (about a child wanting to watch cartoons on TV, and the mother wanting to go with her child to visit friends, for example) is presented to the children, and they are supposed to finish it, adding other possible roles, and play it out in small groups. Such activities are followed by group discussions where children share experiences encountered through the workshops, and the instructor helps them articulate the important topics.

The procedure

In our opinion, the workshop format is the most appropriate form of inducing and promoting the social knowledge and skills to which the GWC program is oriented. The basic outline used in the workshops is already explained in this volume[4]. As a starting point, it has a structured scenario which helps channel the individual engagement of the participants. The scenario consists of structured activities for the participants (usually games), which the instructor introduces as a concrete demand ("Now, let us draw /that and that", "Think carefully and then say...", "Remember some situations when you..."). This is followed by personal experience provoked by the relevant content of the scenario. This experience is individual and intensive, because it is relevant and emotional. It is the basic "raw stuff" enriched through the process of the workshop, and thus transformed into insight and knowledge. The experience would stay raw, un-articulated, non-communicable, if there was not a demand to express it through some symbolic means: a word, a drawing or a movement. So, giving a form to an experience is the step following the demand and the provoked experience. Then, the formed experience is shared with other participants. Sharing, communication with other participants, is the most fruitful way to acknowledge and enrich one's own experience. It has two functions: (a) by expressing one's own experience and explaining it to others, one becomes a bit more aware of the experience and of the way it influences one's behavior; (b) others' experiences enrich our own experience, help us to see it from different angles, especially if connected with various (especially unpleasant) situations. They help the articulation and elaboration of one's own experience, its processing and the insight.

Through such a process, an individual experience becomes conscious knowledge, generalized and integrated into an existing cognitive structure, and thus applicable in other situations ("I understand what my experience means, I know what am I supposed to do when I feel like that and I know how to apply it in new situations"). The whole process helps an experience to be transformed, following the routes from internal to external, from isolated to integrated, from unarticulated to communicable, and thus becoming knowledge applicable in other situations, or at least psychologically available whenever the content becomes relevant, entering into competition with alternative considerations.

The educational workshops used in this program are clearly an active form of learning, and a form of experiential learning. The GWC program stresses the importance of articulation, elaboration and culturally formed knowledge or, as S. Jankovic and T. Kovac-Cerovic call it, "the cultivation of an individual, spontaneous experience through group exchange"[5]. The workshops used in the GWC program recognize the importance of learning through social interaction within the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky), and the corresponding forms of cooperative learning. As an important form of learning societal behavior, the GWC program also recognizes the importance of learning from a model: the way an instructor treats and accepts different opinions, expresses disagreement, reacts to the conflicts within the group etc., becomes model behavior for similar communication with the due respect for one's own and others' needs. Bearing in mind that play is the basic form of activities in the GWC workshops, it should not be necessary to point out that a characteristic combination of divergent and convergent ways of thinking is embedded in the system, too.

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[4] See the text by T. Kovac-Cerovic, "How can we as parents and educators foster metacognitive Development?"

In the GWC program different forms of work with children are used, like: simultaneous individual activity, work in pairs or in small groups, work with the whole group (the whole school class of approximately 30 pupils), as well as different forms of activities/expressions: drawing or painting, singing, dancing, motor movements, "sculpturing", role-playing, acting, group discussions, playing introductory and finishing games...

The system

The GWC program is a system of three sub-programs adapted for various ages of school children: (a) for younger (grades 1-4) and (b) older (grades 5-8) elementary school children, and (c) for high school students. Each program has 8-15 workshops (lasting 90 minutes) with the same thematic structure, but adapted to different ages.

The age of the pupils defines the way particular topics are elaborated and the workshops organized. Some aspects of the workshops have to be adapted according to age differences with great care; these are: the content (theme) of the workshop, play context, the character of the demands posed to the children, the dynamics and the organization of the activities, as well as the kind of materials used. Also, the sequences through which a certain theme is elaborated have to be suitable for participants of different ages: for younger participants some themes have to be sequenced into smaller units, and for older ones they can be elaborated within bigger units and on more general levels. For example, for younger pupils the conflicts have to be elaborated through many small steps: it is necessary to work on the concept of needs, then obstacles, possible helpers and so on. For older ones all that can be elaborated within one workshop. Also, for younger children symbolic play is the most appropriate form of activity, and for older ones other forms can also be used. Or, since the dynamics of a workshop are mostly conditioned by the degree and the quality of the attention span of the children, and their ability to concentrate, they too have to be adapted to the age differences. Besides, for younger children the forms of activities have to be varied, with frequent breaks consisting of motor activities, and for the older ones the whole workshop can consist of only one kind of activity.

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[5] S. Jankovic, T. Kovac-Cerovic. "Basic assumptions of the workshops" in: *The Good Will Classroom - an introductory volume of the Manual* (published in Serbian).

As already stressed, the themes of the sub-program's workshops are built one upon the other, following the same schedule. In that sense, each sub-program looks like a closed system. But, this does not mean that the whole GWC program is a closed system. If the basic principles of the program are followed, particular workshops can be changed and adapted to the particular situations of implementation. The detailed instructions given in the manual for implementation of the GWC program help users - the teachers, school psychologists and pedagogues, or others working with the school children, to introduce such changes.

An example

The GWC program has a rather complex structure, not easy to explain on a few pages, and it would probably be a good form of introduction to present just one workshop as an illustration. The selected one is from the sub-program for older elementary school children:

They persuaded me

The aim: *This workshop is designed to help pupils acknowledge the mechanisms of social influence on an individual and her/his behaviour. A special focus is on the power of the peer group as an agent of socialization, and on the phenomenon of group pressure. Children can get an insight into the reasons for the resistance to group pressure and the need for accepting responsibility for one's own deeds, or reconsidering the consequences of one's own decisions.*

The process *of reaching these aims starts with an outline of possible social influences on an individual. The discussion is opened with the help of a poster with a drawing of a marionette, and the question: "Who influences me and my behavior?" Facilitated by the instructor, children discuss what are the "models" for their behavior and what are the forms of social influences. The problem of peer group pressure is opened with the story "They persuaded me", which initiates the processes of identification and decentration. Within a framework close to their everyday lives, the content of the story enables children to test various skills of resistance to group pressure, to* *acknowledge a need to rely on oneself and one's own interests, and to try to say "No" to the group in a potentially risky situation, and suggest another, "safer" solution.*

Material

- *The poster with a marionette (make a copy of the poster from the supplement 8.1).*
- *Lists with questions for each group (supplement 8.2).*

Introductory activity

THE POSTER *10'*

The Instructor puts the poster on the board. Imagine that you are here instead of this marionette. What do you think, who is making her move, who is holding the threads? Who is influencing you and your acts, your behavior from the outside? The instructor asks for each of the pronounced agents: Why do you think so? In which way, how does (that) influence our behavior?

The Children suggest various sources of social influence, and the instructor, or someone among the children, writes them down within the drawn "clouds" connected to the marionette. The instructor stimulates the discussion (Is there somebody else who influences our behavior?).

If the children omit some important agents, for example media, ideas, peers, the instructor mentions them.

Are all the influences equally powerful? Which among these is the most powerful, and which is the weakest?

Are there any different opinions?

Can you yourself reach a decision which influence to accept and which not to accept?

For which of these influences can you by yourself reach the decision to accept it or not?

Are there any other opinions?

What do you think about the influence of your peers? Can you resist them or not?

The theme of this workshop will be just that one: the influences of the peer group.

Main activity

THEY PERSUADED ME *75'*

Steps:

1. Division into groups and listening to the story	*5'*
2. Discussion within small groups	*10'*
3. Reports from the small groups	*20'*
4. If I was in Shone's shoes, I would...	*20'*
5. Looking for a solution in similar situations	*20'*

1. DIVISION INTO GROUPS AND LISTENING TO THE STORY.

According to their own will, children form groups of 5-6. *I will read you a story about something which could happen to any of us. After that, each group will get a task relevant to the story. Listen carefully. The title of the story is, "They have persuaded me".*

It was a hot summer afternoon. Shone was sitting in front of the building, on the stairs of his entrance. He was alone and did not know what to do. - "God knows, where are the others? What happened to these men? Not a soul around!" Suddenly, Blacky and Kisa appeared.

"Shone, brother, what are you doing?" asks Blacky.

"Nothing. I'm bored to death. Do you have any ideas what to do?" says Shone.

"Let's go to the school yard to see what's on there", suggests Kisa.

They walked to the school, and nobody was there.

"Well, let's make some fun, men... Let's break a door down and cause some chaos inside..." Blacky suggests.

Shone hesitated. He was not sure whether he wanted to do something like that or not. "Well, I'm not sure... What if they catch us, it could be tough. ... The police could come..."

"Look, nobody could get us, what's with you, man? Don't behave like a cissy! Don't panic!" Kisa says convincingly. "Besides, we will not overdo it... Just a bit of fun.."

"Oh, well, let's do it," Shone says not quite sure. He was not delighted with the plan, but he wanted to be with his pals.

And so, while they were "tidying up" professor Markovic's chemistry cabinet, removing the bulbs, writing graffiti on the walls, turning the books upside down, the watchman suddenly appeared, called the police and their *parents. When Shone's parents asked him why he did it, he answered: "They have persuaded me!"*

2. DISCUSSION WITHIN SMALL GROUPS.

And now, each group will get a list with questions relevant to the story. Try to put yourself into the positions of the actors of the story. Your task is to discuss the listed questions and, as a group, to offer answers. You have 10' for that. Afterwards, each group will present the opinion they have come up with.

The questions from the supplement are given to each group.

(How will professor Markovic feel when entering her cabinet?

What do you think, what will she do when she sees such chaos?

What do you think, how will Blacky and Kisa explain what they did?

What was Shone was thinking and how did he feel after all that was done?)

3. REPORTS FROM SMALL GROUPS.

The instructor asks each group to present their opinion. The answers to each question are presented one by one.

It is important to connect the offered answers, to weigh up each of the consequences which the actors of the story did not take into consideration before their adventure.

When the reports are finished, the whole class discusses the following questions:

What do you think, why did Shone accept his friends' suggestion?

What had influenced his decision, what was he afraid of?

The discussion should be channeled to the question of Shone's needs and fears. The expectation is that the children will realize that Shone agreed to participate because he wanted to show his friends his devotion, at the same time being afraid that they would ridicule him and call him a cissy.

4. IF I WAS IN SHONE'S SHOES, I WOULD...

We will try to see now what Shone could have done in this situation in order to reject his friends' suggestion, and at the same time keep good relations with them. I will stand in the middle of the circle, and act as Blacky and Kisa. Let each of you imagine that he or she is Shone. Let's support Shone a bit. Maybe he was not in a situation with no other outcome. Let's think what Shone could say to his friends while staying as close as possible to what he really wanted. How could he reject Blacky's and Kisa's suggestion, and stay *on good terms with them at the same time? I am sure that there are many good ways Shone could approach his friends.*

The instructor has to accept each of the offered approaches. For example, she/he could say: It's O.K. if you think so... It is good. You have been very persuasive... Beside, the instructor should not evaluate the suggestions as good or bad; it is necessary to accept all the offered solutions.

At the end, when all children have said what they have to say, the instructor summarizes the suggested strategies, classifying all similar ones into corresponding categories (for example, an evade-lie-strategy; persuasion-strategy; another-suggestion-strategy...)

5. LOOKING FOR A SOLUTION IN A SIMILAR SITUATION.

Children make groups of 3, according to the order of sitting in the circle. Now, the task for each group is to recall the situations when you have not rejected some suggestions of your peer group. Let them be only those situations after which you felt uneasy because you had accepted the suggestion. Then, together, think about the possible ways of rejecting the suggestion in such a situation, what else could have been said, how one could respect one's own needs and at the same time not offend a friend... You have 10' minutes for that, and then, each group will present the chosen situation and the accepted solution.

After each group's report, the instructor asks all the other children what is their impression and whether somebody has some other suggestion.

Finishing activity

1. HOW MUCH IT TOUCHED ME 5'

Draw on the board three concentric circles. Each child draws a sign of his/her own (dot, star, or something else) in the segment which corresponds to how much he/she was touched in this workshop, the central circle representing the strongest impression.

The manual

The GWC program has been tested and evaluated during the last two years in different school settings (in different kinds of schools: urban - rural, of general type - specialized) and under various conditions (workshops with the whole class (ca 30 pupils) or with classes divided into two groups. The authors of the program are numerous: 15 of them participated in its creation and development from the first ideas to the final page of the manual, which is the end-product of this project. This presentation of the GWC project will end with a short description of the manual's content, for it is published only in Serbia, and is thus not accessible to a wider professional audience.

The manual is published in three volumes. The first, an introductory one, contains articles with the most important information relevant for implementing the program. It contains an analysis of the nature, origin, sequences, dynamics and possible outcomes of conflicts. Besides the most important common characteristics of the conflicts, the conflicts' structures and usual types of behavior in conflicts are outlined[6]. This text is followed by a presentation of the basic assumptions of conflict resolution intervention programs[7] and an explanation of the developmental-psychological bases of the GWC program[8]. It is pointed out which abilities and characteristics are relevant to behavior in conflict situations, and what are the ways to improve them. Also, an important task was to explain into detail the basic assumptions of experiential workshops, with all necessary instructions to the future instructors[9].

Like the authors of similar programs, we do not expect our program to influence only the development of the target social knowledge and skills necessary for constructive conflict resolution, but we do expect that thanks to this program the involved pupils will apply and transmit that knowledge out of our workshops, to others - to their peers or family members. That's why the problems of evaluation of similar programs are opened and possible subjects of evaluation outlined[10]. This analysis offers an overview of the most frequently used indicators of the expected changes and an explanation of the ways of accessing and comparing them. This is followed by some extremely valuable personal experiences from working with groups, and explanations of how to keep the workshop's dynamics, how to define, follow and change the rules of the group work, how to react to certain typical situations, and how to cope with conflicts in the group[11]. At the end of this introductory volume there is a Catalogue of the 97 games used in the GWC workshops as introductory or finishing activities[12].

The second and the third volumes present the sub-programs. Each subprogram presentation contains the detailed description of the workshops and all necessary instructions for the instructors. In order to make clear that this paper is based on the contributions of the many authors of the GWC program, with whom all eventual compliments and criticisms blames have to be shared, let me finish it by listing their names. The authors of the sub-program for younger elementary school pupils are: Ruzica Rosandic, Slobodanka Jankovic, Nada Korac and Marina Jankovic; for the older elementary school pupils: Svetlana Kijevcanin, Suncica Macura-Milovanovic, Marija Krivacic, Slobodanka Jankovic and Maja Radojevic; and for secondary school students: Dragana Ilic, Milena Jerotijevic, Danijela Petrovic and Dragan Popadic.

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[6] By Tünde Kovac-Cerovic.
[7] By Diana Plut.
[8] By Ruzica Rosandic and Nada Korac.
[9] By Slobodanka Jankovic and Tünde Kovac-Cerovic.
[10] By Dragan Popadic.
[11] By Snjezana Mrse.
[12] By Suncica Macura-Milovanovic.

Children and Education in a Cultural Context

CHILDREN, CULTURE AND EDUCATION

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The ecology of childhood and its implications for early childhood education has become a focus of attention for many early childhood educators and researchers throughout the world. Gura (1994:97) has suggested that '... what childhood signifies at any time in history or in any society is a reflection of its demography, politics, economy, culture and spiritual life'. While numerous researchers have examined factors, such as the characteristics of the family, the mother, the child and the interaction of such characteristics with features of the community in an ecological approach to understanding childhood and children's development, it is necessary to take an orientation which is broader than this micro-system perspective. Development can only be fully understood when it is viewed in the larger cultural context. The culture in which children are reared may be the mainstream or dominant culture or children may be reared in one of the many sub-cultures which are to be found in most countries. Because children and families are embedded within local communities, within particular political and economic strata of society as well as within particular ethnic or cultural groups, today's children grow up with very different experiences and expectations about the world and consequently need educational services which take into account their diverse backqrounds.

The world in which we live is becoming smaller - a global village - with families, for a range of reasons, moving to and settling in countries which may be quite dissimilar to their country of origin. There are few countries which can claim a homogenous population. Today, the majority of countries are characterised by multi-cultural diversity, a factor which has enormous implications for early childhood educators. One of the implications of contemporary immigration patterns is the increased need for opportunities for dialogue between early childhood educators within their own communities and countries, as well as contacts with colleagues in other countries. An outcome of such collegial communication has been that our understanding about the similarities and differences between children and their different experience of childhood has deepened. There is much to be gained by learning about the values, expectations and practices in other countries which relate to children and education. Rebecca New (1994), at a recent conference in Melbourne, Australia argued that the multiple perspectives provided by international inquiry broadens educators' understanding of both the task of education and of children and their development. With the world's children growing up in rapidly changing societies and themselves undergoing important changes, international conferences will assist in achieving those ends which are particularly important as we define our goals and priorities for early education in the 21 st century.

Our current understanding of children points to the existence of a high degree of universality in terms of their development and learning. However, there is much evidence to show that a high degree of diversity also exists which arises from factors such as environmental conditions, personal characteristics and individualised pathways to and processes for learning. More than ever before, the onus upon educators and those responsible for planning and developing educational programs for young children is to deliver education that is responsive to the diverse needs presented by children today. As my Australian colleague Margaret Clyde (1994:3) reflected '...we need to consider both the learners and the learning context' when we are considering the type of early education that is to be provided for young children. Herbert Zimilies (1991) suggested that one of the challenges for early childhood educators is to provide educational agendas for young children which focus upon sameness and difference, which recognise the uniqueness of each child as well as the commonness between children and which is grounded in each child's primary frame of reference in terms of family, society and culture. This becomes a huge task when we consider the pluralist nature of most countries today.

An increasing amount of research evidence has demonstrated the importance of the early years in children's lives and the long term benefits derived from participation in quality early childhood care and educational programs (Landers, 1991). Some proponents of early childhood education, for example Archard (1993), go as far to suggest that universal pre-school education is part of a child's rights, part of the right of every child to the best possible upbringing which inherently includes children's access to their origins - national, cultural and social. Participation in a quality structured environment, such as a child care centre, nursery school or kindergarten, can provide considerable benefits in terms of young children's physical, intellectual, social and emotional development (Archard, 1993). For example, children appear to be better prepared for later educational opportunities, their need to develop linguistic skills is met, they can be actively creative and independent while at the same time developing important non-familial emotional ties in an atmosphere of cooperation with other children. Along with being socialised by their parents to become a member of their society and culture, they are taught the values and priorities of their society and culture by one of society's traditional agents of socialisation - the teacher.

However, such early childhood programs need to reflect and value each child's origins which often is not easy for teachers who themselves are not objective and value-free beings (Siraj-Blatchford, 1994). Early childhood educators must recognise that their own cultural heritage can and does influence their perspectives of and attitudes about what is considered in the best interests of young children and the best possible upbringing. The potential for conflict between teacher, parent and child arising from differing values, expectations, attitudes and practices can be high unless early childhood educators attempt to understand their own beliefs, begin to change their own prejudices and behaviours that may interfere with nurturing young children's development and learning as well as learning to see their own culture in relationship to society's history and current political realities (Derman-Sparkes, 1993). This is extremely important in places, such as Europe and Asia, where national boundaries are undergoing considerable change and where the recognition of traditional cultural identities is being demanded as ethnic pride is being voiced. In such circumstances, young children will need assistance from able early childhood educators in order to develop a positive self-concept and group identity without needing to feel superior to other ethnic groups, particularly if this involves developing a bicultural identity, for example, Australian-Vietnamese, British-African-Carribbean, Korean-American or Russian-Israeli identities.

While it is recognised that culture plays an important role in shaping many aspects of child rearing and family interaction, it is not always recognised that culture also shapes the educational opportunities which are provided for young children in any society. When considering early childhood education, in its various forms and settings, it is essential that educators are conscious of and base their programs and curricula upon the fact that children, child development and learning can only be fully understood when viewed in the larger cultural context (Berk, 1994). Culture is a very powerful force in young children's lives. It shapes representations of childhood, values, customs, child rearing attitudes and practices, family relationships and interactions as well as the provision of services outside the home, especially educational services. Each culture expresses an attitude about the value of children in that culture, for example, by the way children are treated and in the focus and philosophical basis of the educational programs that are provided for them.

Educators, especially those working with young children and families need to be aware that culture influences the values, attitudes, expectations and practices which structure the educational settings and experiences offered to young children. While it must be acknowledged that the following examples are generalised stereotypes, they help illustrate differences in cultural orientation. For example, in France, the orientation in early child care and education is on intellectual training and academic achievement; in Great Britain, until a child is three, the emphasis is on social development but from then on academic competence is stressed; in Sweden, there is relatively little emphasis on specific educational goals in the early years where the focus is on developmental issues, particularly socio-emotional development; in Israel, the focus is upon the socialisation of children from diverse cultural backgrounds into the Jewish-Israeli community; in most Asian countries (where primary health care and physical wellbeing are no longer issues for young children), the orientation in early childhood services is on academic achievement and excellence; in the Czech republic (Graves and Gargiulo, 1994), while academic achievement is not stressed in the early years, young children are taught the value and importance of work and aesthetics and cultural programs are introduced by the age of three years; in Russia, early childhood programs devote considerable attention to health and physical education. In Australia, early childhood services have been characterised by their developmental focus. However, parents are becoming interested in early academic achievement for children aged between three and five and are beginning to demand a greater academic focus in the services that they use.

Countries also differ in relation to whether the services for young children are community-based, work-based, privately owned and operated or funded by government. This reflects cultural attitudes about who should be responsible for socialising young children, values related to family autonomy and selfreliance and levels of public support for young children and early childhood services. In this morning's address, children's right to a public upbringing as opposed to a private family upbringing was discussed. While the notion of a public upbringing by non-familial adults is regarded as acceptable, indeed even preferential to a private family upbringing in Sweden, it would be considered to be most unacceptable and not in the best interests of the child in Australia where families are perceived to be the most appropriate context for child rearing.

The approaches of different countries to early education also vary in terms of the implementation of standardised curricula versus responding to the individual needs of children, small group versus large group instruction, teacher-centred versus child-centred processes and the valuing of routine and order as opposed to valuing child initiative and creativity. Such dichotomies, which have arisen from the limited alternatives in approaches to early childhood education currently utilised, do little to advance early childhood programs and their ability to meet the needs of young learners. It is necessary to move beyond, for example, the 'academic versus socialisation' debate in order to establish a sound basis for decisions about early education and curriculum.

While many early childhood educators are sensitive to the role that culture plays in education, some still do not appear to be aware that culture can cause difficulties for children in educational settings if the influence of culture is not acknowledged, valued and acted upon in curriculum decisions. Recurrent difficulties between early childhood educator, child and parent can occur from the different values, expectations, attitudes and practices held by people socialised into different cultures but living in a society dominated by a particular culture. Our heterogeneous societies demand culturally responsive educational services, practices and programs which can actively engage the increasingly diverse community of young learners and which can at the same time help children build upon their own sense of identity.

Neuman and Roskos (1994) have highlighted three features of a culturally responsive approach for young children in early childhood programs. This approach aims to affirm children's own cultural identity and develop an understanding and appreciation of other cultures. First, a culturally responsive approach acknowledges and appreciates children's home cultures and attempts to build upon skills and knowledge which children already have acquired. Second, it promotes collaboration among and between children and adults as they learn through social interaction. Through social play, each child's cultural and individual differences can be expressed in ways that can promote the mutual acceptance of differences, the sharing of cultural perspectives and the construction of new knowledge.

Last, a culturally responsive approach to education becomes an opportunity to help children function well in their own culture as well as in the mainstream culture. Consequently, it is also necessary to set the same standards for achievement for children from diverse backgrounds as for those children from the mainstream culture. Setting different standards for different children according to their cultural background can disempower them, marginalise them and put them at a disadvantage which is not consistent with the rights of the child to the best possible upbringing. Early childhood educators need to set the same goals for all children but may need to select different ways of meeting these goals for children from non-mainstream cultures. Spodek (1991:165) argues that 'Only by making our educational values explicit and by reflecting on them as teachers make curriculum decisions, can we be sure that the values reflected in our program activities are the values that we wish children to gain. This is essential when we come to consider the question 'what should early education be?'

The reconceptualisation of early childhood education has been a popular topic of debate at a number of recent early childhood conferences. While Spodek (1991) argues that this may be a result of a growing conservatism in early childhood education, rather it suggests a willingness on the part of the field to critically analyse numerous aspects of early childhood education, including the philosophical and pedagogical bases of curriculum. It appears that certain early childhood educators from a variety of backgrounds are beginning to question their present vision of what young children need to know and learn and the ways in which young children construct knowledge. It is common in such debates to find proponents of particular points of view supporting their arguments and generalisations with reference to research findings. While not wishing to be disrespectful to my American colleagues, one of the limitations of these dialogues is that much of the research which is referred to has been derived from studies undertaken in America. While these findings may be valid for some American children and early childhood settings, given the predominantly white, middle class background of many researchers, it is doubtful if such findings can be generalised to young children and early education systems in other countries, given the range of social, cultural and political differences which are to be found, as well as the variation in child rearing practices exhibited within and between different groups of people.

Much of the literature concerning early childhood education is dominated by Western, democratic values, beliefs and practice and reflects very much an ethno-centric orientation. In Western societies, the debate about what early childhood education should be has tended to focus upon examining the relative merits of and differences between the dominant models: the maturationist view, the cultural transmission view and the cognitive-developmentalist view (Jipson, 1991). To date, there have been few exponents of subject-based, curriculum driven approaches to early education, although these appear to be increasing in number. At the same time, many societies are demanding competent children because they are considered to be the building blocks for a skilled, capable and competitive workforce. In the West, this has produced a degree of tension between early childhood educators who, for the main part have endorsed and adopted the cognitive-developmental model for early education (which is referred to as 'developmentally appropriate practice'), and the general community which is demanding a re-emphasis on basic skills training and competency-based education for children at younger and younger ages.

Several writers, among them Jipson (1991), Spodek (1991), Walsh (1991), Clyde (1994) and New (1994), have suggested that the developmentally appropriate practice approach to early education may be unsuitable for some children because first, many early childhood educators do not really understand what it means and how to implement it; and second, because it fails to take into account the cultural context in which children and educators exist (Jipson, 1991). Moreover, some practitioners have expressed concern about the applicability of developmentally appropriate practice to certain early childhood contexts, for example, parent cooperatives (Jipson, 1991). It has been suggested that the developmentally appropriate practice approach does not necessarily reflect the diversity of perspective, experience, values and traditions present in our pluralist communities and, in a hidden curriculum, may even impose a particular class and cultural bias on children, which may sometimes also be elitist.

In addition, Kessler (1991) suggests that the emphasis by early childhood educators on developmental theory ignores curriculum issues by attending largely to the process of teaching but not to the content to be taught to young children. When early childhood educators perceive early education merely as development, contextual factors, such as culture, which have significant impact upon what is to be taught can be obscured. Early childhood educators need to be concerned with developing sensitivity to and insight about where young children are coming from and what knowledge and skills they need to be competent within their own communities and the larger society. This requires respecting and incorporating the cultural beliefs and practices of the local community or communities into educational settings and programs so that young children have the kinds of educational experiences which will enable them to participate meaningfully and competently within their own society.

In order to provide quality early education programs for young children, early childhood educators need to look beyond any favoured type of model or provision and begin to define a set of principles which are fundamental to good practice and which can be responsive to and incorporate cultural patterns and values relevant to individual communities. Approaches to education can differ considerably from one another and still help children become participating members of their society if they are based on sound principles. Some of generally acknowledged principles which are considered to underpin good practice regardless of the model of early education adopted are:

- the establishment and articulation of clear aims and objectives about what early childhood educators want to achieve;
- the creation of well-planned, stimulating and secure educational environments in which play and conversation are valued;
- the development of broad, balanced and child-centred curricula which include a variety of active, meaningful and enjoyable learning experiences;
- the development of warm and positive relationships with adults and peers; and
- a commitment to equal opportunity and social justice for all, with curricula reflecting and valuing each child's family, home, culture, language and beliefs as well as teaching children respect for and appreciation of the richness that diversity brings to our pluralist societies.

Along with these fundamental principles, there are a number of other criteria which are associated with quality educational provision regardless of the type and structure of program. These are;

- well-trained staff who are aware of the importance of continuity and consistency in young children's development and learning;
- appropriate adult-child ratios;
- relevant and meaningful curricula;
- adequate resources;
- regular monitoring and evaluation of the quality of practice;
- participation of parents and liaison with the local community;
- opportunities to interact with a diverse peer group; and
- a multi-professional approach.

Early childhood educators have considerable autonomy in their work, even when they are required to implement standardised curricula. This is because they continually have to make informed choices from a range of available options. As such, early childhood educators are in fact creators of education, not merely implementers of a pre-defined curriculum. However, the choices should not be made in a vacuum, isolated from children's knowledge, needs, interests, family, culture or the local community and its concerns. The choices should be based on principles derived from methodologically sound research.

In today's climate of professionalisation, practitioners and other early childhood professionals are urged to engage in research into all aspects of children, families and service provision in order to improve the quality and responsiveness of services offered. Although there appears to be a growing trend for cross-cultural research, the focus of much investigation still appears to be on examining differences among samples of children from the same culture. Much of the intra-cultural research appears to assume that all children of one culture develop in the same way. In the same way, much of the transcultural research is looking to test if the findings from one culture are universally true for children of all cultures. Future research needs to investigate a number of the complex dimensions of culture which includes examination of the socialisation of children from a range of subcultures who are living within a mainstream or dominant culture. Such research recognises the different learning environments that young children experience within any culture. I have attempted to undertake such research with a number of samples of mothers who are living in Australian society and others who are living in their countries of origin. There are many methodological obstacles which must be acknowledged and controlled for. It is not easy research but that does not mean that it should not be undertaken. Because it will only be when the complex relationships between children, culture and education are more fully understood that new practices and models of early childhood education may emerge which may allow early childhood professionals to be more responsive to the needs of the world's young learners.

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE IDENTITY IN THE CULTURAL CONTEXT

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Background

The Process of Socialisation

The central element in the socialisation process of human beings is the development and transformation of personality. The development of personality is characterised by individual and collective membership in a community. This paper will explore the theoretical definitions of the identity concept and the identity of adolescents living in a bicultural families.

Discussions of the relation between the individual and society or community, of the meaning of individuality, and of the existence of a free will are as old as Western philosophy. According to anthropological folklore, in traditional societies one's identity was fixed, solid and stable. Identity was a function of predefined social roles and a traditional system of myths which provided orientation and religious sanctions that dictated one's place in the world and rigorously circumscribed the realm of thought and behaviour. One was born and died as a member of one's clan and tribe, a member of a fixed kinship system. In pre-modern societies, identity was unproblematic and not subject to reflection or discussion. Individuals did not undergo identity crises, or radically modify their identity. One was a hunter or gather, and a member of the tribe, and that was that (Kellner 1992).

In modernity, identity came more mobile, multiple, personal, self-reflective, and subject to change. This raises the question, is it the case that in modern societies one is caught up in so many different, sometimes conflicting, roles that one no longer knows who one is? If so, both identity, and the issue of identity, become increasingly problematic in modern times.

In the literature there has been a discussion about stable and fixed forms of identity. Those who argue that identity is stable say that changes in the identity after adolescence rarely occurs. A criticism of the concept of a stable identity can be found in the writings of Jacques Lacan. In his view the individual subject is decentered. There is no autonomous self. A central thesis in Lacan's theory is that the ego, or the personal identity, is constituted in relation to others (parents, friends, relatives, the mass media etc.). The identity is thus constantly undergoing changes which are dependent on our relation with others. According to Lacan it is impossible to talk about stable identity; instead identity can be discussed in terms of preliminary structuring of the subject (Lacan 1975/1991). In Johansson's concept of identity both of these conceptions of the individual have something to say regarding the complexity inherent in modern identity. He points out that the identity could at the same time be both more fluid and more stable.

If we accept Lacan's thesis, modern identity is formed in relation to the different agents of socialisation: family, school, work, peergroup, the mass media and so on. In our society, therefore, individuals play a multitude of different roles. They are constantly occupied with developing their own unique personality. It might be said that there is a gap between so called personal identity and social identity and this gap leads to a constant quest for a meaningful way of integrating these different poles. Moreover there is also the need to be personality and a member of the special group at the same time.

The two different theoretical notions concerning the role of identity and self and its relation to the processes of socialization

1. The identity as an intern, subjective, personal, hidden subject of the action. The self-concept of the person him/herself.
2. The identity in relation to others. In this notion there is no identity or self without you, them, others. The identity will always be developed in relation to others. So, we can say that there is no identity without you and others (Järvilehto 1994).

These theoretical notions are at the same time examples of the discussion of identity in psychology, sociology and anthropology. Every science has its own way of looking at identity and its processes of development. Finding one's identity is one of the developmental tasks of every adolescent. The adolescence is a sociocultural phenomenon, not only a very deep psychological phase. There has been a tendency not to see the youth as a problematic phase and moving into adulthood. The new research regards the young as an area for research which has its own targets to study and its own right to exist, not only as an open country between child research and adult research. Youth research varies its study focuses: research can concentrate on developmental aspects as the developmental psychology does or on the youth as a social group as the sociological and social psychological research does.

The research related to the identity of youth has been focused mainly on three theoretical starting points. The ego-psychological theories, especially the theory of Erikson (1968), are concerned with youth as a period of identity crisis. According to Marcia (1980) the identity means the commitments of later adolescence: work, occupation, political orientation and he distinguishes different kinds of types or typologies of adolescents. Erich Fromm (1976) approaches the socialization of an individual from the point of view of his or her struggle for autonomy: each person has an urge to create and an urge to be their own creator. They have a need to transcend their own passive existence, and create a feeling and a need of being alive, an identity

The socio-cognitive approaches point out the research topics especially in self-concept and self-esteem and the relation between the self and ideal-self as well as the stability of self-concept (Festinger 1957, Hormuth 1990). The social psychological approaches e.g. Tajfel's theory of social identity (1981) concentrates on the area of an individual's self-concept, which is based on the person's consciousness of a membership in a particular group and the value of that membership as well as its emotional meaning to the person. The idea behind is that the individual is forced to walk a thin line between personal identity and social identity. One feels the need to be unique, of experiencing oneself as a personality, although one is at the same time a member of various social groups.

G.H. Mead (1967) proposed that identity is formed in relationship with others."It has been the tendency of psychology to deal with the self as a more or less isolated and independent element, a sort of entity, that could conceivably exist by itself.... other people are there as much as we are there..To be a self requires other selves." Mead never used the term "identity" but talked about "self". Ill use it in my own work as long as we can prone that identity and self could be two different things. Mead distinguishes between the concepts "me" and "I" in the self. The individual can change the point of view towards him/herself and in principle experience him/herself both as an object and as a subject. The subjective side of self is I and the objective side is me. The objective aspect refers to an identity through others and the subjective aspect refers to the reaction of the subject to the others. The identity is both at the same time: the reactions from others and their anticipations, the individuals own reactions and answers to them. These two sides are always present in identity. It's typical of human action that at the same time he/she can be the object of his/her thinking and a reflective subject. A person can also be asked about his/her opinion about him/herself as an object of observation.

Minority- and immigrant groups in Europe - consequences for the European youth research

We live in a world where the processes of unification and diversification proceed apace. But this process is now occurring faster than ever before. In some ways, large-scale human groups communicate with each other more than ever, know about each other more than ever, and have become increasingly interdependent. At the same time there is a powerful trend, virtually all over the world, aiming at the preservation or the achievement of diversity in one's own personal identity (Tajfel 1981). The question in Europe is whether the three decades of international migration have brought about a new understanding of national identity or whether it has contributed to the formation of altogether new group identities in Europe. This question becomes particularly acute with the emergence of second- and third-generation descendants of international migrants. They are, in a sense, new Europeans searching for belongingness and the right to their own identities at the same time (Liebkind 1989).

Today about 7 million young descendants of immigrant parents grow up, attend school, and seek an occupational future in the European countries where those parents first went to work temporarily. The share of the total population with foreign origins ranges from about 5 per cent in the Netherlands and Sweden to 15 per cent in Switzerland. The Percentage of immigrants among the populations of the other receiving countries ranging somewhere in between (Liebkind 1989). There are many researchers who have demonstrated that the identity formation of young immigrants and second generation immigrants would be more problematic, and the self-esteem lower, than in the indigenous youth (Weinreich 1979). We can pose the question of what kind of identity bicultural adolescents have, especially regarding their ethnic identity. Is it justified to talk about so-called double identity and does such a situation lie at the root of certain identity problems as has been indicated? Results from research projects studying Finns in Sweden, for example, showed that Finnish youth were well- acculturated in the Swedish society. But the Finnish youth were an exception among other immigrant groups. They wanted to switch their mother tongue quickly into Swedish and their reference group was soon their Swedish friends. Finnish youth wanted to quickly distance themselves from the culture of Finland and be assimilated into Swedish society (Ouvinen-Birgenstam 1984).

The identity of bicultural adolescents: aims, subjects, methods and some results of one research

The purpose of this article is to examine the question of identity and identification of young person living in a bicultural family. The focus will be on two points, first the orientation to the two cultures and the process of identification with the parents. I have observed the living situations of bicultural youth, their feelings about their identity and their orientation to two cultures and I have interviewed adolescents aged about 14 to 15 born and living in Germany of whom one parent (usually the mother) was Finnish. The sample consisted of 109 bicultural adolescents and the methods were an applied form of the Grid method based on Kelly's personal construct analysis (Weinreich 1989), a self concept questionnaire (Scheinin 1990) and a group interview.

The Orientation

The cultural orientation types were classified after the question concerning their cultural identity ("I feel myself..) The answers were classified in three groups. I found three orientation types:

1) monoculturals: "Culture 2" (German) 40 % (N=44)

2) "German-Finnish" : 38 % (N=42)

3) monoculturals :"Culture 1" (Finnish) 20 % (N=23)

How did adolescents exposed to these orientation types ? Could there be found some clarifying factors or variants that could distinguish between the experiences of adolescents in the different groups? The results indicated that there could not be found any variants that would clearly separate these three groups of adolescents from each other. Instead, separating factors could be found between two cultural groups, "The Finns" and "The Germans". The factors were found by Discriminant Analysis, where the discriminant function is formed by separating in the best possible way the groups from each other and by identifying the variables that are important to make a distinction between the groups. These two groups were clearly separated from each other by the following factors:

	FINNISH ORIENTATION	GERMAN ORIENTATION
LANGUAGE	two languages	one language
FUTURE	towards Finnish society	towards German society
CULTURAL ORIENTATION	towards Finnish culture	towards German culture

Figure 2. Factors related to cultural orientation

The Finnish oriented group spoke Finnish more often with their mother than the German oriented group. The mother also spoke Finnish more often with them. With their brothers and sisters they also spoke Finnish more often. In the future, "the Finns" planned to study and work for some time in Finland. The "Finns" also preferred Finnish culture in their orientation. For example, they felt at home in Finland, had many contacts with Finnish people, preferred Finnish lifestyle, and felt more comfortable in a country setting rather than in an urban setting. The German oriented group, on the other hand, preferred the urban setting.

Problems in identity and identification process

Do young people living in bicultural families have problems in relation to their identity? To answer this question we used the applied form of Kelly's Grid method. In the Grid method the subject has to analyse the following entities: him/herself (self-image), his/her ideal self, friends, parents and German vs. Finnish youth etc. according to specific constructs or qualities. The evaluation provides a 12 x 14 grid where comparison can be made between different entities, for example me and my mother, me and my father, me and German youth, me and Finnish youth. The following figure forms one part of the grid , in which the adolescent compared himself with his/her parents. The extent of an adolescent's current identification with another is defined as the degree of similarity between the qualities one attributes to the parents, whether "good" or "bad", and those of the adolescents current self-image. This is called empathetic identification.

MOTHER	MYSELF	FATHER
Traditional	Modern	Traditional
Money orientation	Life Orientation	Money Orientation
Work Orientation	Life Orientation	Work Orientation
Warm	Warm	Warm
Dominates	Dominates	Dominates
Freedom Important	Freedom Important	Freedom Important
Prefers Culture 1 Lifestyle	Prefers * both of them	Prefers Culture 2 Lifestyle
Prefers contacts with culture 1	Prefers* both of them	Prefers contacts with culture 2
Feels comfortable in culture 1	Feels * comfortable in both of them	Feels comfortable culture 2

* there could be separated three different orientation groups

Figure 3. The identification of the adolescent with his/her parents

The parents were important factors of identification and the most important and central factors for the formation of identity in the youth. The adolescents' relationship to his/her parents is always a part of the their own identity formation process. This process is characterised by collaboration and communication with parents. In our study, mothers represented the traditional model and their orientation was towards Finnish culture. Most adolescents wanted to distance themselves from these orientations. Conversely, father represented German lifestyle and orientation. The young person also wanted to distance themselves from this orientation. The adolescents in a bicultural family live "between" cultures but there did not seem to be any double identity problems in this group. They also did not appear to have problems belonging to any culture. The families were multicultural: both of the cultures have had an influence on the family traditions, on child rearing practices, and on values in these families. The cultural influence on the adolescent occurred in both directions. "In the kitchen there is culture 1 and in the living room culture 2".

Discussion

In my research I am trying to formulate theoretical questions concerning the foundation and formation of identity. One of my findings is consistent with the socialpsychological theory associated with Mead. In his theory the identity develops socially, through generalised others. The origin of the identity is always in a social context. We cannot find an identity which is hidden somewhere in the individual.

Given this finding it is relevant to discuss methodological questions. How do we understand the concept of identity? My answer is that we have to research identity by asking the person trying to define who he/she is. The only way to reveal the social origin of the identity is to study it in a social, and cultural, context. That is, in a situated context and in relation to others.

Adolescence is the time when the basic question "Who am I" is asked with unrelenting force and insistence. It is also the time and when reference groups, significant others, and roles are carefully observed in an attempt to derive meaningful answers. These answers are extremely dependent on the social and cultural involvements of the adolescent. It is the unique nature of these involvements contributes to the unique nature of the individual personality. After Sebald (1992), the traditional social psychological theories of the process of identity formation contain an assumption that the identity is a holistic phenomenon that is relatively integrated. The clarity and comfort with which the individual views her/himself depends on how clear and free of conflict the sociocultural conditions under which their identity developed, were. Contemporary social psychological theories held that, since the social environment has undergone significant structural changes, the process and product of personality development have also changed. The members of modern societies no longer develop a uniform outlook of life. Rather, they learn situational ways of solving problems and have to rely more on communicative and interactional skills than on rigid principles. There is not just one special identity, there are many identities, many situated identities. The individual in a modern, complex, world has to choose between many commitments and identities.

This process is not something we are working at or thinking about all the time. It becomes relevant especially in situations where we are afraid to loose our identity or when we have to decide where to belong. So we could say that in adolescence these kinds of questions are crucial and central. This is the reason why we study identity questions in adolescence.

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PROMINENT OR HARD-WORKING? ABOUT SEX-BASED INTERPRETATION FRAMES IN EDUCATION

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Introduction

In many years student teachers have had a task to become acquainted with children in one class during their first school practice period. After the period the students have written a report of one of the children. There have been some common problems in the reports. One of them has been that the pupil descriptions - or stories, as I have begun to call them - have been only loosely situated. This means that the stories have included very little description of the children's real school life. The second problem has been connected with the first. Instead of interpretations made by the student teachers personally about the children, the stories have included interpretations made with the voices of the class teachers. The third group of problems has been connected with gender. (See Sunnari 1992; 1995.)

One special feature, which I have interpreted to have been connected with gender in the stories, has been that the girls who have been interpreted as being successful in school have at the same time been interpreted to be "terribly conscientious", "overconscientious" or something like that, whereas corresponding boys have been interpreted to be scientific types. I suggested that the term "overconscientious" may refer to the phenomenon of trying too hard, but, in addition to that, it seems to refer to an ideological type, a diminishing and gendered interpretation of someone and her or his activities. This article is a report on an effort to verify the claim. The central person in the effort is Anna. Anna was described to be successful and overconscientious in school in a report made by a student teacher.

Theoretical starting points

My theoretical starting-points in understanding humans and their growth are based on activity-theoretical conceptions (see Engeström 1987) rooted in Vygotsky (1978), Leontjev (1978, 1981), Ilyenkov (1977) and their followers. According to them, it is not the biology that determines the human growth and personalities, nor the social and external world as such. These are both present in the human growth processes, but a further link is needed which unites these two. The link is activity, the human's active relations towards the ideal and material world and towards her- or himself as part of that world.

The ideological formations, which are understood as belief systems and as parts of the ideal form of the world, appear to constitute the central basis on which people value and locate the material world and its events and processes. Belief systems connected with gender are one part of these ideological and ideal formations. (Connell 1987; Acker 1991; Lorber & Farrell 1991; Lorber 1991; West & Zimmerman 1991.) Corresponding to the general idea, the main form of reproducing gender lies in the interactional-social activities, in people's actions in their interactional activity contexts. This process appears to begin when a baby's parents and the other people acting with the baby know her or his sex and continues throughout the person's life. (See Bem 1983; Ortner & Whitehead 1981; West & Zimmerman 1991; Grabrucher 1991.)

The shaping of gender contains different processes. (See e.g. Connell 1987; Acker 1991.) One of them is the creation of differences and hierarchies between the sexes, which are essentially not biology-based. Another gendering process is the construction of symbols and images that explain the hierarchies.

Study setting

My practical aim was to try to find out the contents to the attribute "overconscientious" and to analyse it from the perspective of gender. I accomplished this by listening to and analysing different voices (see Wertsch 1991) applying to one pupil, Anna, and her success in school. The idea of voice means that I do not assume that the interpretations which the pupils give are truthful of what the interpreter her- or himself actually thinks about the matter. This presupposition makes it possible to see texts as constellations rooted in different quarters and to try to identify some socially shared ideological formations in them.

The first set of voices consists of the student teacher's reports on Anna and Ismo, a successful boy, and a discussion with the students after they had handed in their reports. I compare the interpretations of Anna and Ismo. The second set of voices was construed in a group discussion with Anna and four of her classmates. The classmates were pupils whom Anna's class teacher identified of being successful in school and whom she interpreted as not being overconscientious.

The central objective was, as it has been mentioned earlier, to try to find out the contents of the attribute "overconscientious". The following subtasks were undertaken while analysing the data:

1. What kind of a picture is to be obtained about the overconscientiousness of Anna, a successful girl in school, and about the scientific quality of Ismo, a successful boy in school, by analysing the student teachers' descriptions of Anna and Ismo?
2. How do Anna and her classmates describe the phenomenon of overconscientiousness?
3. Whom do Anna and her classmates interpret to be overconscientious in their class?
4. How do Anna and her classmates interpret Anna from the perspective of overconscientiousness?
5. How do Anna and her classmates interpret at a more general level the boys and the girls in their class from the perspective of overconscientiousness?

Stories of Anna and Ismo - two successful children in school

A story of Anna and Ismo

At the time of the reports, Anna was on the fifth and Ismo on the first form. Both of the student teachers who made the reports were female.

The student teacher began her **story of Anna** in the following way:

> "I chose Anna as the pupil whom I wanted to become acquainted with, because I found so many features in Anna which were similar to myself when I was in school. Anna is (a pause, VS) a terribly conscientious girl and a girl who has various hobbies."

The student then went on to describe in more detail her own school years, her hobbies at that time, her success in school and her difficulties in the social relations with her classmates. After that she continued the report.

> "Anna was a kind of person who dares to be herself. She had a very special way of dressing and she seemed to be very thoughtful, a really thinking person. I started to have discussions with Anna and I noticed that Anna knew very many things.

When we had a pupil introduction with the teachers in charge, I think they said very much to the point that Anna is an overconscientious girl interested in various things.

(...) From many points of view she seems to be terribly gifted. She is good in gymnastics and in playing the piano and really good at crafts. (...) When we were dealing with human in biology, for instance, Anna had gone to the library (...) and she had found a very good book about the human being for young school children. And every day when we had lessons on human beings (...) Anna would come to the front of the class voluntarily and say that she would read out some facts about humans (...) She really wanted to know things.(...) I think the other pupils also understood what it is to get additional details like this.(...)"

The **story of Ismo** contained the following comments:

"(...) Ismo was a scientific type. He was interested in all kinds of strange things andeverything new that was discussed in the class. (...)

We once had a story time. The children would suggest which book we should read. Ismo produced a children's encyclopaedia, one in which there was information about the ancient Egyptians. It was quite a difficult text. He said that he wanted the teacher to read it to him. It was his own book. (...)

Ismo was a kind of person who reflected (...) and (...) discovereddifferent things. (...) He said for example, that the break supervisor should stay in awatch tower to see all the children and (...) that there should be traffic signs on the school corridors to prevent the children from running there. (...)

It was nice to see that Ismo sometimes got quite carried away during the music lessons. When they were singing a song, he decided with another boy that they should sing in earnest. And so they sang in a very loud voice because they liked it.(...)

They would be so enthusiastic now and then.(...)"

Student teachers' interpretations of scientist features and overconscientiousness from the perspective of gender

You can find many similarities in the reports on Anna and Ismo. Anna and Ismo were both interpreted to be successful in school. Both of them were also said to be interested in various things. Both of them had brought a book to school; a book which the students rated to be scientific. Both of them wanted to share their knowledge of the books with their classmates or at least with the teacher. And both of them were described as being able to surpass currently valued norms.

But there are important differences, too. Although both pupils were said to be interested in various things, Ismo was said to be especially interested in various new things. And because interest in new things is related to cleverness, it is possible to claim that Ismo seemed to be more clever. But we should look into the texts in more detail. Ismo's "new ideas" referred to his proposals of having traffic rules in the corridor and a watch tower for successful break time supervision. Anna's intellectual relation towards the world was described as follows:

- she was interested in "various things"
- she was "terribly gifted" in various skill areas
- she knew very much about various matters and was eager to discuss them with the student teacher
- every day while they were discussing human biology Anna would, voluntarily, read interesting facts from a book she had brought with her. And according to the report, Anna's "facts" introduced new and interesting knowledge to the class.

Courage and independence, which are also related to cleverness, were differently present in the stories of Ismo and Anna. Ismo was said to be able to surpass the norms of school behaviour, whereas Anna was said to surpass the actual dressing norms. Finally, it can be assumed that Ismo was more clever, because he had a scientific book at home, but Anna only borrowed one.

However, it is obviously impossible to make any valid interpretations on the basis of the two stories as to whether one of these two children was more clever than the other. It is only possible to claim that there were differences in the things which attracted the student teachers' attention and aroused their emotions towards these children, that the student teachers used different terms to illustrate their "findings", and that these differences were typically gendered.

I asked the student to explain why she interpreted Anna to be overconscientious. The argument she gave was connected with the biology project, which was mentioned in the story of Anna. The logic of the argumentation seemed to be that Anna was overconscientious because she worked very hard on her homework. One indication about it was the case. To be conscientious in her homework on human biology, Anna went to the library, borrowed a book, read from it to the other pupils, etc. I asked the student teacher whether such actions were exceptional or usual for Anna. The student teacher said they were usual.

But the biology case was not the only reason why the student teacher interpreted Anna to be overconscientious. According to the story, the class teacher had said Anna was overconscientious. There is reason to believe the text. The student teachers kept diaries during their first school practice. The words reporting Anna's overconscientiousness could be found almost verbatim in a couple of diaries which were written by students who had participated in the information meeting.

Anna, the attribute "overconscientious" and Anna's classmates

Discussion context

I discussed overconscientiousness afterwards with Anna and a couple of her classmates. Anna was on the sixth form at that time. To construe the discussion groups, I asked the teacher to name the first four children whom she interpreted to be successful in school and whom she interpreted as possibly not being overconscientious and then four children whom she interpreted to be successful and to be overconscientious. Anna and another girl, Pauliina, who was also interpreted by a student teacher to be overconscientious, were excluded from the selection process, although they participated in the discussions. However, I asked the class teacher whether she interpreted Anna or Pauliina to be overconscientious. She said she did not.

The persons whom the class teacher named to be successful and not to be overconscientious were Ana, Juho, Jaska and Jake. These four children are all boys. The group of successful and possibly overconscientious pupils included Eeva, Jena and Kati. They ali are girls. I then asked the teacher to mention one boy, too. I got the name Pertti. The teacher interpreted Pertti as possibly being or not being overconscientious.

I made up two discussion groups of these pupils. The first of them consisted of Anna and the four pupils whom the class teacher mentioned to be successful and whom she interpreted as not being overconscientious. The second group consisted of Pauliina and the four pupils whom the class teacher interpreted to be both successful and overconscientious.

In this paper, I will only report the discussions of the first group.

Beginning of the discussion: Anna, Pauliina, Eeva.... all girls are overconscientious

The first important issue was that the term "overconscientious" was not in active use among the pupils. I told the pupils that I understood the term as an inclination to work harder than is reasonable and maybe trying more than one considers her- or himself to be able to do. This was the starting-point for discussing this phenomenon.

From the very beginning, the discussion on overconscientiousness turned to the question of overconscientious pupils. The boys named them. The first pupil whom the boys named was Anna and the second Pauliina, the two girls whom the student teachers had interpreted to be overconscientious. Then the boys named Jena, Eeva and Kati. They were also the girls whom the class teacher had named. In addition to the girls named, some of the boys stated that all girls are somehow overconscientious. Being a member of the discussion group, Anna tried to refute the claim on her part.

What is the phenomenon of over- conscientiousness like?

The first content the pupils gave to the attribute "overconscientious" was that one gets top marks by working too hard for them. This was the argument they repeated over and over. The following fragment of discussion illustrates this point well.

Jaska: If you see her (Pauliina's, VS) test papers, it is 10, 10, 10, 10-1

Interv: *But does it mean that if you have 10, 10* (I was interrupted, VS)

Jaska: Well no, but look at her answers.

Anna: Her mother and father are teachers.

Jaska: If Pauliina and Eeva have a presentation and I and Jami have one, the presentations differ so that Pauliina's and Eeva's presentation lasts for 15 minutes and ours for 3 - 4 minutes.

Interv: *But is it a sign of overconscientiousness?*

Ana: Well, it is.

Jake: It is sometimes.

Interv: *Why is it particularly a sign of overconscientiousness?*

Jaska: They always get ten as the mark.

Ana: That's right.

Jaska: Well, maybe not the tests as such. You must compare their ways of studying; if they study for three hours for a vocabulary test, I study for 5 - 10 minutes, if at all. It is a necessity for them to get high marks.

(...)

Jaska: We had a terribly difficult test in Finnish and many of us got real low marks. Eeva was the only one who got full points. Everybody else had to repeat. Only Eeva had a possibility to do something else.

Anna: Well, she had everything right.

Jake: I studied a lot, too, and I got quite a good mark, but Eeva must surely have studied for many hours because she got such a very good mark.

On the whole, an overconscientious pupil appears to be a person

- who *always* gets full marks in test. This was the main argument.
- who *considers it to be obligatory* always to get high marks
- who *works hard* particularly *to get full marks* and to *please other people*

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1 This is the highest possible mark in a Finnish numerical school report, where the scale is from four to ten

In addition
- she does school work all the time
- she has no time for hobbies and friends
- she answers with the words of the textbooks
- she gets better test marks than the other
- she accomplishes study products which are superior to the others, particularly with regard to quantity, such as the duration of presentations.

"Overconscientiousness" was also connected with the feature that one always does voluntary school work.

The person who spoke most during the discussion was Jaska. Contrary to him, Anna was interrupted frequently and had difficulties in making herself heard.

Anna's classmates interpreting Anna from the perspective of overconscientiousness

The question of Anna's overconscientiousness was present in the discussion from the very beginning. Anna herself consistently denied the justification of such an interpretation. However, there was no open discussion on the theme.

Interv: *(...) do you have cases where somebody is very conscientious, overconscientious?*

Jaska: Well, like **Anna**

Interviewer: Anna, a*re you overconscientious?*

Anna: No, (a pause, VS) I hate this theme

(...)

A little later I returned to the topic by asking the boys about the matter.

Interv: *Boys, you said Anna is overconscientious?*

Jaska: Well, maybe not.

Interv: *But you said so.*

Jaska: Well, she may be sometimes, but (He did not continue, VS.)

Ana: Well, it is so.

I returned to the question of Anna's overconscientiousness once more in a situation where the pupils had said that one of Eeva's test answers had been directly from a textbook.

Interv: *Well, do you think that Anna also has some inclination to answer directly according to text- books?*

More than one of the boys: Not always.

Jaska: But I have sometimes got better marks than her (Anna, VS)

Anna: Yes, that has happened sometimes.

Jaska: But she (Anna, VS) may have had a much better school report than I.

Anna, are you overconscientious?

As it could be seen earlier, the first pupil whom the boys named to be overconscientious was Anna. Anna's first and immediate reaction to the claim was to deny it. The reaction was strong: she simultaneously said she hates the theme. During the discussion I asked Anna to compare her style of studying with the style the group said Eeva had. "I never study so much for any test", Anna replied.

A little later I introduced the topic of the biology project and Anna's additional study material. I said that I had heard Anna had worked very hard during that project. At first Anna did not remember the project at all. The pupils discussed the additional materials they sometimes bring to school and the additional knowledge which they may have and which they may be eager share. The pupils' opinion was that if you have some knowledge, you will share it and it is normal.

I then asked Anna if it was usual for her to bring additional study materials to school. She answered that it depends on whether she is interested in the theme they are studying and whether she has some additional material for it. After that discussion she remembered something about the case in biology.

Anna: "When we were learning about the human (a pause, VS). We had a book about the human being. There are all kinds of things in it. It must have been that book that I read."

According to the student teacher's story, the book was borrowed, while Anna did not say anything about that.

Are all girls overconscientious?

Interv: *Somebody said that all girls are overconscientious*

Two of the boys: Yes (was interrupted, VS)

Jake: It depends on the group

Interv: *Anna, is it so?*

Anna: No it is not. Not all girls are over (was interrupted, VS)

Ana: Most of them are (was interrupted, VS)

Jake: Well, we boys also want to get good marks, but we would not like to read so much.

Jaska: There is something more interesting to do.

The trend of opinions turned during the discussion. The boys' first comment was: yes, all girls are overconscientious. But there was Jake, a boy, and Anna, a girl, who did not agree with the claim. They both tried to make themselves heard. Anna was interrupted. Jake got himself heard and it was he that turned the direction of the discussion. Jake connected overconscientiousness with good marks and maintained that boys would also like to get good marks.

Anna, are there overconscientious boys in your class?

The last theme I introduced was connected with boys and overconscientiousness. I addressed the question to Anna. But Anna's difficulty to make herself heard was continuous. Jaska was the first to express his opinion. It is difficult to estimate what was the significance of the beginning of the discussion on this theme for Anna's answer. However, Anna was consistently more analytical in her comments than the boys. Another interesting feature can also be seen in this part of the discussion: there are also ruptures and changes in Jaska's rhetoric.

Interv: *One more question. You have discussed girls that you interpret to be overconscientious. Anna, it is your turn to tell me now if there are some boys who can be said to be overconscientious?*

Two or three boys: No, there are not.

Interv: *Boys, it is not your turn to answer. It is Anna's turn.*

Jaska: Well, can we comment then?

Interv: *Yes, of course, just as Anna was also allowed to comment.*

Anna: Well, there may be or may have been some cases in our class, but it is difficult to remember. I think there are some.

Anna named one. It might have been Jake. However, it was not possible to hear it exactly, because Ana spoke loudly at the same time. I did not ask Anna to repeat because of her addition.

Ana: There are not, there are not.

Anna: There are sometimes, (a pause, VS) in tests (pause, VS), usually there are not. But it is so that girls are usually a little more conscientious than boys.

Jaska: It is usually so that the marks in school and being in school are much more important for girls than for boys. It has no meaning to me (a pause, VS), or it has some meaning (a pause, VS), but school does not mean so terribly much to me (a pause, VS) or, well, school does mean, but one test does not.

Anna: Some boys behave in tests so that they only try to do them quickly and then go away.

Interv: *Boys, do you want to comment?*

Jaska: No.

Ana: There are no overconscientious boys.

Jaska: Some of them get good marks in tests, but nobody does all the time.

(...)

Interv: *Which of the boys get good marks?*

Jaska: Well, Eero, Jake. Jake understands. He gets such marks as 8 - 9,5.

Ana: Well, Jaska, too, gets good marks sometimes.

Jaska: Well, in math.

Interv: *You don't consider Jake to be overconscientious, do you?*

Boys: Well, no.

Interv: *What do you consider him to be like?*

Jaska: He swims, too. It takes many hours a day.

Interv: *Well, how do you call him instead of calling him overconscientious, because he gets good marks?*

Jaska: He is good. He understands. He tries to remember everything that is said.

According to the boys, all or most of the girls were overconscientious. The girls named as overconscientious were all successful in school. The boys named successful boys, too. They were not interpreted as being overconscientious by the boys. A successful boy is good. The differences between successful boys and girls were clearly visible in the boys' discussion. The boys have time for hobbies, they do not read too much, they do not always get top marks, and if they are successful, they understand the matters, whereas the successful girls work too much for their marks, and have no time for hobbies. Moreover, according to the boys, the successful boys' ways of studying were more valuable than those of the successful girls. However, although these differences of opinion did dominate, it is not possible to say that all the boys share them as such. Jake seemed to be more analytical in his interpretations, and Jaska, the dominating person, changed his style towards the end of the discussion.

Overconscientiousness as a gendered interpretation shared by student teachers and pupils

On the basis of the stories and interviews, it is difficult for me to interpret Anna as overconscientious, but it is also not possible to claim that she is not. This kind of "truth seeking" has not even been my aim.

The purpose of the study was to find out the contents of the interpretation of overconscientiousness and to analyse it especially from the perspective of gender. According to the pupils, an overconscientious person is one who always gets the mark 10 or full points in tests, who feels it obligatory always to get good marks, who does school work all the time, having no time for hobbies and friends, who answers with the words of the textbooks, who works hard to get top marks and to please other people and who (always) does voluntary school work

Anna was said not to get always "full points", to have lots of friends in and outside school, to have time for her friends and to have many hobbies. However, she was said to be overconscientious. This interpretation was shared by the student teacher, and to some extent by her classmates. And there is reason to claim that the class teacher had also somehow shared the opinion.

In the interview and discussion groups, most of the boys had an ideological-type gendered orientation towards the question of overconscientiousness. This orientation was somehow "ready": Anna and Pauliina get full points and good marks. That is why they must be overconscientious. I claim that such "ready" interpretations are typically ideology-based. The boys' orientation did change to be slightly more analytical during the discussion. However, the opening of a new perspective seemed to presuppose courage to surpass the actual "atmosphere" of the discussion and a status to make oneself heard.

Anna's interpretations of the boys were more analytical and more dimensional than those of the participants who dominated the discussion. Anna's way of making distinctions between her study style and the study styles of the pupils whom she interpreted as being overconscientious was interesting, too. According to Anna, the picture of an overconscientious pupil is the following:

An overconscientious pupil

* spends very much time to study even for simple tests, such as a vocabulary test
* answers in the tests from memory
* works to please the teacher

For Anna herself, gendering in the context of success seemed to imply diminishing interpretations of her performance and her success. In the context of the group discussion, gendering seemed to assign to Anna also a lower status than the loud-voiced boys had.

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SOCIALIZATION ATTITUDES AND PRACTICES OF KOREAN MOTHERS OF YOUNG CHILDREN: THE INFLUENCE OF CONTEXT

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Introduction

Examination of the socialization of children and parentchild interaction has been the focus of considerable research. Many of the findings point to a startling consistency in the major dimensions of parenting behaviours regardless of cultural origin. However, it is recognised that variations do exist in parents' socialization techniques which are related to cultural expectations about appropriate behaviour (Hamner and Turner, 1990). Mothers of young children are regarded as being particularly knowledgeable about child rearing attitudes and practices specific to their own culture (Whiting and Whiting, 1975)

While the literature generally reports data based on intracultural studies which often differentiates urban and rural families, a paucity of data is available about the child rearing practices used by mothers from cultural groups who are permanently or temporarily living outside their country of origin, for example, Korean mothers who are resident in Australia. These mothers are living in one society with all its values, customs and mores which guide child rearing practices. Yet, they are also living outside that society because presumably they are influenced considerably by the values, expectations, customs and norms of their culture of origin in relation to young children's upbringing. Professionals who work with children and families in their own cultural context and, more specifically when families are resident outside their birthplace, need to be aware of the ramifications of cultural background as it relates to child rearing attitudes and practices.

Unlike parents who live in their country of origin, parents who have settled elsewhere do not have the same access to traditional normative guidance and support in child rearing (Gfellner, 1990). Bronfenbrenner (1977) argued that family, friends and community supports are important facilitators of successful parenting practices. In the absence of operating guidelines, parents who reside outside their country of origin are likely to attempt to develop their own implicit theory of child rearing which may be influenced by the need to help their children integrate into the new society. Child rearing practices may be a combination of traditional practices, idealised practices from the country of origin and practices common in the adopted society. The potential lack of congruence and dissonance for parents living outside their country of origin may impact upon their child rearing behaviours and result in unexpected variations to traditional patterns.

Research into aspects of child rearing within a specific culture poses a number of challenges for researchers. First, families from specific cultures are not necessarily homogenous, although Korean society is distinguished by homogeneity. Yet, subtle differences can be found to exist in child rearing practices even in homogenous societies. Second, groups of people have different reasons for settling in another country. For example, some groups migrate for political reasons, some for economic reasons, some to escape ethnic sanctions or religious persecution and some to pursue education. Many Korean adults study overseas to obtain qualifications which will improve their economic status. Socio-economic status has been highlighted as a critical factor in parenting practices (McLloyd, 1990). Research evidence suggests that families who are assimilated into and achieve middle class status tend to use child rearing practices similar to those of the middle class of that society. This means that middle class parents who are studying in another country may be affected by exposure to different values and introduce changes to their child rearing practices.

Accelerated social change in most societies has left many parents fearing the erosion of their cultural values, practices and identity, especially if they are resident in another society. However, at the same time, they may feel obliged to support each family member's integration into the changing society. These two pressures can be in conflict for parents who want to give their children opportunities for educational and occupational success without sacrificing alienation from the values, attitudes and customs of the country of origin. Research evidence has revealed that increasing exposure to Western child rearing practices by parents results in departure from traditional practices, with child rearing practices becoming closer to those of the west (Strom and Daniels, 1985). This may be reflected in Korean society which has experienced much change due to the influx of western values and beliefs (Chung, 1993). These factors may be critical to understanding the attitudes and practices which are relinquished and/or adopted by Korean parents in their rearing of children. Contemporary child rearing by Korean mothers may no longer be simply a continuation of traditional ways.

It is important to understand that the study of socialization and parent-child interaction is embed with the researcher's personal, cultural and religious values (Boss, Doherty, LaRossa, Schumm and Steinmetz, 1993). The way in which the research project is framed can be influenced by the researcher's values with respect to the ideas presented, the types of questions asked as well as the way the information from parents is analysed and interpreted. It is important for researchers to be aware of their own influences and biases when framing the research questions, hypotheses and methodologies. This study was conceptualised by an Australian researcher and therefore may reflect personal and cultural biases in the methodology and interpretation of findings.

The purpose of the study was to identify any similarities and differences in child rearing attitudes and practices held by Korean mothers living in urban and rural environments in Korea and Korean mothers living in urban Australia. It was decided to confine the study to mothers of young children because mothers tend to be responsible predominantly for child rearing in most cultures. The decision to select mothers with children between three and six years is related to the concept of 'the age of understanding' (Kelley and Tseng, 1992) which is considered to be achieved by children between the ages of three and six. It is during these years that the indulgent attitudes which parents may hold for children under three years tend to give way to notions of stricter, culturally relevant discipline for children.

Research questions

1. What are the expectations regarding the behaviour of Korean children aged between three and six years held by their mothers?

2. What child rearing techniques and practices are employed by Korean mothers to elicit culturally appropriate and acceptable behaviour from their children?

3. To what extent are traditional cultural values about child rearing reflected in the practices of urban and rural Korean mothers and Korean mothers residing in Australia?

Method

The subjects

The subjects for this study were sixty two volunteer mothers who had at least one child aged between three and six years. They were recruited by three Korean graduate students in early childhood departments at Yonsei University, Seoul (N=20), Kangnam University, Kangnam (N=23) and the University of Melbourne, Australia (N=19). The mothers' age ranged between 28 and 42 years, (mean = 33.74, sd = 2.8). All were married (self-initiated=62.9 %; arranged =30.6%) and those who are living in Australia had been resident between 15 and 180 months (mean = 62.8 months, sd = 42.9 months). The majority of mothers had two children (64.5 %), with 30.6 % having one child and 4,8 % having three children (mean=1.74, sd = .54). In terms of education, 22.6 % of the mothers had completed secondary school, with 8.1 % having completed post high school level, 56.5 % holding a bachelor's degree and 12.9 % holding a post graduate degree. There was a significant difference between the groups in educational level with the Seoul mothers holding lower educational qualifications than the other mothers (F(2,59)=7.29, p=.001). While only one of the Seoul mothers was employed, almost all of the Kangnam mothers (91.3 %) were employed. Across the total group, nearly half of the mothers were employed (43.5 %), generally on a fulltime basis (33.9 %) in professional (22.6 %), technical (29.0 %) and managerial (22.6 %) positions.

Instruments

A structured interview conducted in Korean elicited data on biographical details and child rearing attitudes and practices. Parents were presented with a series of common child behavioural incidents and asked to explain how they typically responded to such incidents with their child. Examples of behavioural incidents focused upon attention-seeking, risk taking, aggression, dominance, dependence, conformity, curiosity, non-compliance and conformity. Parents were asked to react to another series of examples which focused upon responses to children's comments about events in the environment. Finally, parents were asked to explain how they taught their children to be obedient, respectful, cooperative and to engage in gender appropriate behaviour, if they valued such behaviours in their children.

To assess parental strengths and needs in child rearing, the participants completed the Parent as a Teacher Inventory (Strom, 1982) which had been translated into Korean by one of the Korean graduate students. This is an attitude scale of 50 items providing information about what parents of 3 to

9 year old children expect of their child, how they interact with their child and what actions they take in response to specific child behaviours. Parental responses can be grouped into five content areas of parental needs: creativity, frustration, control, play and teaching-learning. Reliability and validity information for the instrument is reported by Strom and Daniels (1985) which confirms its appropriateness for use with parents from diverse ethnic and socio-economic groups.

Procedure

Three Korean research assistants completed a structured interview and administered the Parent as a Teacher Inventory in Korean to each mother individually. A letter introducing the study and a consent form translated into Korean were presented to each participating mother. The research assistants interviewed the majority of the mothers in their homes, although a small number of interviews were completed at child care centres before the mother collected her child. Each interview took between 60 and 90 minutes to complete. The data were collated by the Korean graduate student in Melbourne.

Results

The results of this study revealed that the three groups of Korean mothers held many attitudes and expectations in common. However, some significant differences existed between the groups. When asked what aspects of parenting they liked the most, being a parent (37.1 %) and talking and playing with children (17.7 %) were the most common responses for the Seoul and Kangnam mothers. Only the mothers who were living in Melbourne identified watching their child develop (26.3 %) as an aspect that they liked the most. In terms of what they liked least about parenting, the high level of responsibility (27.4 %) and issues of punishment and control (21.0 %) were the least preferred aspects. The Seoul mothers indicated that not having enough time for one's own life (40.0 %) was an issue for them even though the majority were not employed. The skills most needed by parents were considered to be patience (32.3 %) and information (21.0 %), with the Kangnam mothers identifying objectivity (34.8 %) as an important skill.

The majority of mothers (74.2 %) considered character building and the acquisition of appropriate behaviour to be their greatest concerns about their children. However, the Seoul mothers has significantly more concerns about their children (F(2,59)=3.89, p=.02), raising concern about their children's health as an important issue (45.0 %). This may be a reflection of the nature of the environment with Seoul being a very large urban and polluted city. The Seoul mothers expressed significantly more concern about their relationship with their children than the other mothers (F(2,59)=11.83, p.05) The Kangnam mothers reported significantly more aspects of parenting that made them feel guilty than the other mothers (F(2,59)=4.99, p=.009) and reported being concerned about having their children's love and respect (30.4 %). Given that these mothers were employed, this concern with relationships may reflect the smaller amount of time that they have to spend with their young children.

The mothers expected their children to develop respect for elders (95.5 %), to obey their parents (77.4 %), to cooperate (98.4 %) and to engage in socially desirable behaviour (75.8 %). Those mothers in the highest income group (more than 50,000 won per year) expressed significantly more concern than other mothers (F(2,59)=4.22, p=.004) about teaching their children socially desirable behaviour. These data support the documented effects of socio-economic status. The Seoul mothers were significantly more concerned than the other mothers about teaching their children cooperative behaviour (F(2,59)=11.93, p<.05) and teaching about gender expectations (F(2,59)=10.00, p=.0002).

In response to the presentation of a range of common behavioural incidents, the mothers indicated that they tended to use reprimands and physical restriction as well as suggestions, explanations, encouragement and offers of assistance when responding to their children's inappropriate behaviour. The qualitative responses were classified according to categories generated from the pool of responses expressed by the mothers. These categories were recoded into two broad categories: adult oriented techniques (which included direct commands, reprimands, restrictions, physical and verbal punishments and prohibitive interventions) and child oriented techniques (which included explanations, suggestions, encouragement, offers of assistance or alternatives, positive incentives and supervised activities). No significant differences were found between the three groups of mothers in terms of their use of behaviour management techniques. No significant differences between adult and child oriented techniques were found between the three groups of mothers for behaviours involving attention, risk taking, aggression, dominance, dependence, conformity, curiosity, non-compliance and conformity. These data reveal that Korean mothers utilise a range of techniques but prefer control-oriented, authoritarian practices for responding to inappropriate behaviour from their children.

Early socialisation attitudes, expectations and practices of the sample which were assessed by the Parent as a Teacher Inventory (PAAT) revealed differences between the three groups of mothers. PAAT items are clustered into five areas of parenting which correspond to key socialisation attitudes and practices. Absolute means of 25 for each of the subsets and 125 for the total score distinguish between practices which were considered to be favourable or unfavourable in relation to children's development and learning in Western societies. The instrument has been translated into Korean and used with Korean parents living in America.

Table 1 summarises the overall scores for the total group and for each group. The total mean score of each of the three groups of mothers exceeded the absolute total mean of 125. The total PAAT score of the Seoul mothers was significantly higher than those of the other two groups (F(2,59)=4.27, p<.05). With the exception of the Control and Teaching Learning scores, the scores for the total group on each of the subsets exceeded the absolute mean of 25. The Seoul mothers scored significantly higher than the other two groups of mothers on the Control subset (F(2,59)=4.44, p<.05) but significantly lower on the play subset (F(2,59)=4.37, p<.05). These data suggest that the Korean mothers overall use child rearing techniques which are considered to facilitate children's learning and development according to Western developmental theories. The total group recorded higher mean scores on the creativity and play subsets and recorded the highest mean score on the play subset (27.73).

Table 1. A Comparison of Mothers' Mean PAAT Scores.

PAAT SCORE		Korean Mothers Living In		
	Total Group	Melbourne	Seoul	Kangnam
Creativity	27.02	27.63	27.30	25.26
Frustration	25.35	25.47	27.50	25.04
Control	23.08	23.05	29.30	27.04
Play	27.73	27.58	23.90	25.78
Teaching & Learning	23.11	23.00	28.90	27.52
Total	137.53	137.74	141.75	133.70

Note: Absolute mean for total group is 125 and 25 for each subset.

The mothers from Seoul recorded a total mean score well above the absolute mean (141.75). Their scores on all of the subsets, with the exception of play (23.0), were above the absolute mean. While their overall early socialization attitudes and practices appear to be favourable for facilitating children's learning and development, their understanding of the role of and ways to play could be expanded The mothers who are living in Melbourne scored above the absolute mean on all of the subsets except control (23.05) and teaching and learning (23.00). A significant difference between their understanding and use of control (F(2,59)=4.44, p=.01) compared to the other mothers was found. Perhaps these mothers' greater reliance on authoritarian techniques is related to the stress and strain of trying to assimilate to a new and often alien culture. Current research evidence points to a relationship between stress and the use of power assertive techniques in child rearing. These mothers could benefit from an increased understanding in the appropriate exertion of control of young children.

Finally, the Kangnam mothers recorded the lowest total mean score of 133.70 compared to the other groups. However, this score is still above the absolute mean of 125. Unlike the subset scores of the other two groups, all of the Kangnam mothers' subset means are above the absolute mean of 25. Their most favourable scores were recorded for teaching and learning (27.52) and control (27.04). These data suggest that the Kangnam mothers hold a broad understanding about the types of early socialization attitudes which facilitate young children's development and learning.

The creativity scale examines parental support for child fantasy and imagination. It is concerned with parental acceptance and support of child behaviours that promote higher level thinking and imagination. The Korean mothers in this sample tend to encourage their children to ask questions, make guesses, engage in pretending and experiment with problem solving. They were reluctant to express uncertainty in front of their children.

The frustration scale aims to identify disappointments which parents experience as a result of expectations that are inconsistent with children's developmental levels. The items focus upon specific aspects of child rearing that are sources of annoyance for parents. This sample of Korean mothers responded favourably to situations such as tolerating noise, tolerating the disorder of children's play, encouraging children to express their fears and anxieties, dealing with attention-seeking behaviour, joining in with children's activities and being patient in dealing with persistent questions from children.

The control scale deals with the degree of child control preferred by the mothers. The willingness of mothers to share decision making with their child, to permit displays of dominance by the child, to permit the child to disagree with the mother and to permit the child to talk more than adults in family conversations is examined here. The Seoul and Kangnam mothers recorded favourable attitudes and practices in the area of control with the mothers who are living in Melbourne preferring greater adult control of the child.

The play scale investigates mothers understanding of play as an influence on child growth and development. The items examine maternal attitudes to the value of play for boys and girls, understanding of the benefits of play for social, language and cognitive development and the extent to which they understand how rewarding play is for children. The mothers living in Melbourne (27.58) and the Kangnam mothers (25.78) expressed the most favourable attitudes and practices in this area with the Seoul mothers revealing poorer understanding of the value of play in relation to children's development with a mean score below the absolute mean.

The teaching learning scale examines parental attitudes to their own ability to facilitate the child's intellectual development. This items in this scale investigate the mothers' understanding of the value of the pre-school years for children's learning, their capacity to identify conditions that promote learning, to evaluate whether the child has learned a skill, their willingness to offer instruction and to respond appropriately to their child during play. The Seoul (28.9) and the Kangnam (27.52) mothers scored above the absolute mean in this area indicating favourable attitudes and practices compared to those of the mothers who are living in Melbourne (23.0).

Level of education was significantly negatively correlated with the PAAT subsets of control (rho=-.3374, p=.007) and play (rho=-.3319, p=.008) while the number of children was found to be significantly negatively correlated with the teaching and learning subset (rho=-.3123, p=.013). Concerns about children was found to be significantly correlated with the total PAAT score (rho=.3283, p=.009) and with the aspects that parents liked most about being a parent (rho=.3143, p=.013).

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that Korean mothers of children aged three to six years employed a variety of techniques to respond to their child's behaviour. However, for some specific behaviours, they revealed a preference for authoritarian attitudes and practices which included conformity to parental wishes by the use of direct instruction and commands, and coercion by the use of reprimands and restriction. Nevertheless, while issues of control and obedience were important, the mothers also reported that teaching and encouraging children to be independent and self-reliant were of great concern when interacting with their children in child rearing situations. The mothers were not only control-oriented but were including a child-responsive dimension to their interaction with children. The mothers from Seoul appear to be different to the mothers living in Melbourne and the Kangnam mothers. They generally are not working and hold lower educational qualifications. Their high PAAT score suggests that they employ child rearing practices which tend to facilitate young children's learning and development. However, they do not appear to fully understand the importance of play for young children as do the other mothers. They expressed a greater number and different types of concerns about their children. The mothers living in Melbourne appear to have developed an appreciation for watching their child develop which may be related to Australian families concern and interest in child development. However, their understanding and skill in the areas of control and teaching and learning does not appear to be as well developed as the mothers living in Korea. Perhaps, isolation from their culture and uncertainty regarding expectations about parent-child relationships in Australian society have impacted upon these areas. In spite of some differences, these Korean mothers appear to share some socialization practices which are considered in Australia to promote desirable personality characteristics and socially independent behaviour in children.

The findings of this study have determined some of the early socialization attitudes, expectations and practices which influence child rearing by mothers from Korea. Traditional expectations and values are evident in their responses, particularly in areas of control. Yet, Korean mothers also are regarded as supportive (Yi, 1993) . While many Korean parents report difficulties with parenting (Chung, 1993) and are perceived as strong disciplinarians (Honig and Chung, 1993), the data from this study suggest that at least some parents have acquired and employ appropriate parenting strategies. Early childhood professionals in Korea need to be aware of areas of similarity as well as difference in parental child rearing strategies. The findings also point to parenting issues which early childhood professionals in Australia need to be aware of in their interactions with parents from Korea and in the planning of parent education programs. Some parents may benefit from information about child development and practices which enhance an understanding of the role and means of play, appropriate control and the ways in which parents can teach and facilitate children's learning in the pre school years. Because mothers are children's first and long-term teachers, it is important that they understand the dimensions of their role and develop favourable attitudes and practices as well as realistic and reasonable expectations of children's capabilities.

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EARLY CHILDHOOD HERSTORIES: AN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT ON THE CHANGING EDUCATIONAL IDEAS OF TEACHERS IN NEW ZEALAND

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The project

Most studies in the history of educational ideas have focused on what influential educational theorists and policy-makers have said and written at particular times. Such studies have constructed a 'view from the top.' They do not tell us much about the educational ideas and practices of 'ordinary' teachers. We are interested in the ways theoretical debates have been 'lived' by teachers, and are particularly interested in the impact of various waves and strands of 'progressive' (or child-centred) educational ideas on teachers, and the ways in which teachers have encountered and dealt with these ideas in their everyday practice. A history of educational ideas which relies too heavily on policy documents and teacher-education texts can imply that teachers have passively absorbed what policy-makers and teacher-educators have told them. The balance between prescription from 'above' and innovation from 'below' is not clear cut. In New Zealand there has certainly been innovation in classroom practice from 'below' but there has also been directions for change from the Government. For example, in the past few years there has been a considerable turmoil of change in relation to curriculum policy throughout all sectors of education, much of it imposed from above and reacted to from below. However, putting direction into practice is not so easy and may be accommodated, resisted and/or subverted by individual teachers in practice (Anyon 1983). The 'official' texts of education history do not capture the everyday realities of teacher accommodation or resistance to new educational ideas, education policy, or the impact of children or parents on the curriculum. Nor do such texts capture the grassroots changes from below or the ways in which new ideas from teachers begin in action, often without a name or theory attached, but with a sense of being a different approach to a problem or situation. In interviews with teachers it is possible to track these beginnings through to being 'named' and/or becoming accepted practice or policy - or of course being rejected.

The project is to write a book on the changing ideas of teachers in New Zealand for which we are interviewing up to 170 teachers from aged 25 to 90 years about their life in education, in the classroom and the early childhood centre (Middleton and May 1994). The objective of the book is to create snapshots of educational theories and debates as lived by teachers within particular periods, in early childhood centres, primary and secondary schools, over the past seventy years.

- 1920s-1940s: The interwar years and the beginnings of progressivism
- 1940s-1950s: The postwar years and progressivism enters the mainstream
- 1960s-1970s: 'Neo-progressivism' - liberation politics and radical rethinks
- 1980s -1990s: 'New right' accountability and a challenge to progressivism

Twenty of the interviews have been with teachers who work in sessional kindergartens with 3-4 year olds. This paper looks at the just one period of time - the 1940s-1950s, and lets some of these kindergarten teachers tell of the changes they experienced, they created, they had imposed, and in some cases fought against.

Teachers have always 'used' theory, since every 'act' of teaching - whether engaged in out of 'habit' or 'rule-following' or informed by an explicitly worked through theory - is unconsciously or consciously selected from a repertoire of strategies which are discursively, biographically, historically and culturally constructed. In our wider project we want to introduce our students to educational theories as teachers experience, choose, and live them in the everyday settings in which they live, think, and work. Student teachers often experience and describe a gap between theory and practice. Our text should help close this gap by offering students examples of 'theories-in-action' in the everyday educational world. In this we hope to model for them the ways in which education professionals from different times, age-groups, cultures, geographical locations and socio-economic backgrounds have - within the possibilities and constraints of their circumstances - selected from the ideas available to construct their own educational theories. This should help our students to deconstruct the educational and other possibilities of their own lives and to view themselves as active and creative educational theorists, who will not merely mimic what has gone before, but create new amalgams of the theories and concepts which they encounter in the course of their professional lives to create new pedagogies and educational strategies.

New Zealand early childhood background

It will be useful before proceeding, to provide a brief overview of early childhood education in New Zealand. There is currently a diverse range of early childhood services, all of which exist in partnership with the Government to provide early childhood care and education to a considerable proportion of the 0-4 year old population (i.e. 11 % under one's; 26 % one to two's; 46 % two to three's; 79 % three to four's; 96 % four to five's year olds) (Ministry of Education 1994). At five children go to school. Unlike public schools, early childhood services have never been 'owned' by the Government, but exist in a regulatory and funding partnership with Government. The free kindergarten, whose teachers are the focus of this paper, is the oldest service, established in the late nineteenth century, and has received government support since 1909. Up until the late 1940s, the level of Government support was minimal and kindergartens relied on fundraising and charitable contributions for survival. Historically, each service negotiated its own partnership with Government; the success of which depended on the political mood of the time and the extent to which that early childhood services could be 'packaged' as a means of meeting agreed political outcomes. From the late 1940s, when the idea of early childhood education was politically acclaimed as a 'good thing', successive Governments provided increasing funding and support (May 1990). The consequence was that kindergartens for 3-4 year olds were eventually funded almost all their costs. Other services were not so successful and, for example, childcare centres received no direct support until 1983. The 1989 Before Five policies brought all services into a similar regulatory partnership with a funding formula based on the age of the child and the length of attendance. Kindergartens currently cater for about 45 % of early childhood provision, but in the mid 1940s there were only about 2500 free kindergarten places which catered for about 10 % of children in the age group (Mason 1944). There were few other options available and most children were not attending any early childhood service. During the late 1940s and 1950s provision began expanding with the postwar baby boom.

Kindergarten teachers are the most cohesive group of early childhood practitioners in New Zealand and of course their story stretches back the furthest. The thrust of change for kindergartens since the 1920s has been four fold:

Firstly, the transformation of the kindergarten curriculum from one characterised by formality and timetables, towards child centred progressive educational ideas embodying self expression, choice and free play;

secondly, the shifting role of the kindergarten teacher from that of self sacrificing and dedicated 'girls' with a philanthropic mission, to political women of the teaching profession;

thirdly, the increasing role of mothers and parents in the management of the kindergartens and as partners in the programme. Kindergartens were originally established by the well to do as a service for poor children in which mothers were to be 'educated'; and

fourthly, the emergence of a range of other early childhood services which kindergartens have gradually come to accommodate as other options for parents.

This paper constructs a scenario 'debate' by teachers of life and learning in the kindergarten around the issue of 'freeplay' during the 1940s and 1950s. Kindergartens were moving out of their earlier philanthropic role, and into a closer and more lucrative partnership with government, but in exchange for an increased Government voice in their daily operations.

Scenario: "Let the children be free" - the 1940s-1950s

New Zealand may have been distant from the beginnings of progressive educational ideas in Europe but was it was no backwater (May 1992). The amalgam of new psychological and sociological insights into child development, adult neurosis, classroom management and the nature of learning and knowledge coming from theorists such as Freud and Piaget, and educators such as Dewey, Montessori, McMillan and Isaacs found a small but receptive audience in New Zealand. From the 1920s there were strong links with international progressive education organisations, and throughout the education system there were individual teachers and educators trying to teach and work with children in ways that allowed more child activity and choice, fostered creativity and enabled self expression. Likewise, there is evidence of considerable awareness and interest by kindergarteners towards progressive education ideals, and contact with nursery school innovations in Britain and America from the 1930s. 'Free play' became the principal practice of progressivism in early childhood, although there were a range of rationales for why free play should be a key part of the programme, and considerable variation in the extent and degree of free play deemed appropriate. The idea first emerged at the turn of the century from American kindergarten reformers who were critical of Froebellian practice (Dewey 1900; Hall 1911). The first mention of free play in New Zealand is surprisingly early and appears in 1912 as a 20 minutes time slot amidst a tightly timetabled kindergarten programme of teacher directed group activities (Christison 1965). Throughout the next thirty years the time allowed for 'free play' expanded sometimes to 35 minutes (Cosson 1970), an indication that the idea was not sufficiently attractive to overturn the existing kindergarten regimen of order and direction. In the 1930s New Zealand kindergarteners still saw their aims for children as developing "good habits", "self control", and a "sense of responsibility" and a "cooperative spirit", although by 1940s these traits were carefully couched in psychological rationales, and it was acknowledged that free play should allow for children to "develop their general abilities and interests" (Grenfell 1940). Kindergarten teachers were initiating changes along progressive lines but these were mainly small scale, and they saw their programmes as "providing a balance between freedom and discipline" (Scott 1938). The substantive transformation of progressive ideas into practice did not happen until the late 1940s and early 1950s. In 1949 Gwen Somerset critiqued the older regimen of timetabled play time and in her book *I Play and I Grow:* defined what she meant by free play.

> The ordinary routines of a day cut playing time into little pieces... concentrated and interested play should have nothing or no one to interrupt it. A child may build a garage for a whole afternoon if he wishes...we do not wish to see our children conditioned to a group response at this early age. His play must be free and spontaneous....The afternoon must not be divided into set "periods" where adults decide it is time for special occupations. (p.16)

This prescription, however, was not written for kindergartens but for the new playcentre movement whose people and ideas had strong progressive roots, and who provided the first alternative to the kindergarten view of what was early childhood education. Jessie's description of a kindergarten programme of the 1940s was typical. Children were organised into three groups according to age - the 'tinnies', 'middles' and 'tops':

> *Each activity lasted about 20 minutes. The session ran from 9 - 12 and it was divided into times for different things. We had handwork. The children had to sit down at tables and do activities like sewing. Then they had the blocks to play with and they had the dolls corner. There would be books; they had a table of jigsaws, they had painting easels and crayons but each activity was only for a certain period...They had to stay a certain time, at the activity and then move to something else...Then they'd have morning tea and they all had to sit down and were not allowed to walk around. Oh yes! and the toileting. They had to go to the toilet and they would all be herded into the bathroom and they had to sit on the floor, whether they wanted to go or not, they had to sit on the floor and then they had to wash their hands. They had to take it in turns. You see it was 20 minutes this and 20 minutes that and 20 minutes, you know.*

While there was a range of activities in the programme, the ethos was of timetabled kindly order, and of instilling good habits.

> *It was about manners, grace in some kindergartens, making sure that people said, "Excuse me please," and a lot of emphasis on social graces.*
>
> Brenda

Kindergartens were at the time run by local Associations, but not of parents:

> *The kindergartens were run by these ladies. It was their good work, but these people were coming in and telling us what to do.*
>
> Jessie

Kindergarten teachers, most of whom were young, and all of whom were unmarried, often found it hard to initiate change against a tendency for conservatism by the married matrons of the Associations, as Geraldine recalled:

> *It was very difficult because a lot of committees had people on them for a long time, and for a young teacher it was very threatening. When I went to Dunedin, the secretary of my Mother's Club had been secretary for twenty-six years.*

In 1947 the Bailey Report recommended a much increased financial investment by Government in preschool education and heralded the beginning of more direct government involvement in kindergartens. In 1948 Miss Moria Gallagher was appointed by the Director of Education, Dr C.E. Beeby, as the first Preschool Officer in the Department of Education. Beeby was a long time advocate of progressive educational ideals and had been appointed to his position ten years earlier by a Labour Government in tune with his ideas, as were successive Governments in the postwar years. Beeby was convinced that you had to reform the education system from the bottom up and wanted to give more support to preschool education (Beeby 1989). Moira Gallagher's brief from Beeby was to 'free up the kindergartens' (May 1992). Miss Gallagher, an infant school teacher who had first run an activity based programme with her five year old infants in 1926, travelled up and down New Zealand visiting kindergartens:

> *The kindergartens were masterpieces of organisation...The children were divided into groups...They had morning talk and singing together then lavatory, handwashing, morning tea, finger play, painting or plasticine. All things went in rotation. So that all four groups didn't end up in the lavatories together, some had to start the day in the lavatory and then they all swapped. The children were not crying or miserable but you had turned them into parcels.*

This description, is not just one of Departmental disapproval but matches many others from kindergarten teachers themselves, and shows a programme dominated by time, age and set activities. The reaction from kindergarteners to more Government involvement was somewhat cautious, even when it brought a considerable release from money worries for the Kindergarten Associations:

> *The kindergarten people, up to a point, didn't want any government involvement. I can remember when the announcement of Miss Gallagher's appointment was made. We didn't know her. I remember thinking "Being paid by government—how humiliating," because we weren't going to be government servants—we were private enterprise people! It wasn't a profession for a person to be working in government.*
>
> Beverley

Miss Gallagher had decided that no real change in the programmes would happen unless kindergarten teachers were placed on a more professional employment footing which resulted in increased pay and conditions as the first step towards a national pay scale, and later a union. Up until this time the almost missionary ethic of being a kindergarten teacher was much to the fore.

The next few years were ones of considerable change in kindergartens, caused partly by massive expansion to meet the demand of the postwar baby boom. This scenario, however, focuses on the programme changes that were going hand in hand with this. Government had no official role in dictating the programme. There was just Miss Gallagher who visited kindergartens, influenced those ready to listen, and supported those teachers, of whom there were a quite few, who were making changes or wanted to make changes. Here are some reactions of the time:

> *She said, "Yes, you let the children free". I talked it over with the girls I was working with and we let the children free.*
>
> *Helen: Just like that? You must've been easily persuaded then.*
>
> *I didn't need any persuasion, I just let them free because it was more natural.*
>
> *Helen: How did you let the children free? What did you do to let the children free?*
>
> *We didn't have a timetable we just let them free, let them do what they wanted to. We let the big boys go out. You could see them sitting on the mat bored to tears, bored absolutely bored and we let them free these big boys. Well they played outside, nearly all morning and the difference in them! We even let them got to the toilet when they wanted to.*
>
> Jessie

Jessie had had considerable contact with progressive ideas and Miss Gallagher gave official support to something she had long wanted to do. Other teachers had similar stories of support:

> *I can remember Moira Gallagher coming visiting saying, "You can't possibly work in skirts in this condition. I give you permission to wear corduroy trousers, provided they match."*
>
> May

> *Moria Gallagher came to see me. She said one interesting thing. "Now you don't have to be traditional. You can do your own thing. You can explore other areas." And I did. I had begun to free up a lot more. We just did things a lot freer rather than dragging them from one activity to another when they were in the middle of doing something.*
>
> Geraldine

But not everyone was poised for change. Mary did not like being told what to do and didn't:

> *One of the things I was told to do was to loosen up the programme to the extent that it was going to be chaos and it was going to be difficult. It wasn't what we were used to doing. They were doing this in Australia and in other countries.*
>
> *Helen: What was this thing you were you being told to do?*
>
> *They were having creative play going on from nine till twelve, indoor and outdoor play with little organisation or mat periods for the beginning and end. It was, in my opinion, something that was difficult to comprehend and I found it difficult to*

> *accept and I wasn't going to be told. So at the end of 1950 I retired from kindergarten teaching.*

Mary, however, was not totally opposed to new educational ideas:

> *They were basically good educationally, but they were bringing them in too quickly and we were being talked at. The changes were being justified as informality and creativity, but to the extreme. But, in retrospect, we didn't comprehend the value as teachers. Some of us didn't quite accept the way we were being told.*

Mary did return to kindergarten teaching after a trip overseas, and found that the changes had happened anyway and would have to be accepted, but there were some limits to her accommodation.

> *But morning tea all together I felt was important, and that was one of the last changes that I succumbed to...I agreed to give it a go! But indeed I didn't. I wasn't happy with it because I felt the grace was important...I was one of the last ones to go for morning tea being voluntary. It didn't work of course!*

Mary rallied her parents into the fray to support her resistance. She saw a group morning tea as an important social coming together. The formality of kindergarten morning tea and mat times were obviously touchy subjects, but symbolised differing perceptions of where the boundary lay between order and freedom:

> *Another thing I instituted was free milk time—that you could have your milk and apple more or less as you wished...Often I'd get kids to set the table. We'd have place mats and flowers and all the jugs out, and they would pour their own. That created quite a hullabaloo.*
>
> Lesley

Joyce, was already experimenting with more choice in the programme but she had limits as to how far she was prepared to go:

> *In 1948 I introduced something where we bought all the children together before they could choose what to play with...I can remember Miss Gallagher coming down and she was very taken to think that the children were having the freedom of choice, but then she tried to break me from bringing the children together. I liked to bring the children together. That was the one contact that we all had together. Might've only been for a few minutes just to talk about things that were going on,.*

To say that the introduction of programmes where children could choose and play freely was caused by Miss Gallagher's visits on behalf of the Department of Education is simplistic, but there is no doubt that her 'top down' support role was important in galvanising teachers into action who were already primed theoretically. Kindergarteners were influenced by happenings in the playcentre movement, although they were sometimes wary at the degree of freedom allowed in playcentre (McDonald 1993). Teachers mentioned new early childhood development knowledge, and reading the books of Susan Isaacs, particularly *The Nursery Years* (1929), and Benjamin Spock (1946). They also named other teachers and people who had influenced them. For example:

> *Stewart (Elizabeth) Hamilton introduced us to the ideas of Susan Isaacs. She had been to England and studied with Susan Isaacs (1936-8). She came back from*

England and Oh she inflamed everybody and everything. And down here in Dunedin we used to hear about all these lively people and their lively ideas.

Jessie

The main thrust in this first wave of freedom was the abandonment of the timetabled activities and age groupings. Instead teachers placed activities on table tops and allowed free access to the various areas of play such as paint, dough, family corner, books etc., and outdoors there was sand, water, carpentry and climbing frames etc. There was no great change in the actual activities but rather children had considerably more personal choice, less interruptions and there was less formal group times. What did change dramatically was the role of the teacher. This seemed to be a hit and miss thing as teachers sought to redefine what they should be doing.

Did you play with the children?

But in those days you didn't play with children—you were just observing and supervising them. I can remember being told off in my kindergarten for getting into the sandpit!

Hester

Were you a facilitator?

We used to see that they weren't harming themselves, that they were occupied and we gave them things and sat with them at the tables, read them stories. I know we use to be very busy with them.

Jessie

Did it get out of hand?

Well it was just letting the children do what they wanted, literally. We put everything out. We didn't really know how to handle it. I don't think looking back. So we became a little authoritarian, when we wanted to intervene. I can remember sending children to the office, who weren't fitting into what I thought was the right pattern, so I wasn't really doing what I would call free play now. We didn't really understand children's behaviour enough to know what we should be doing during that first year and the next year particularly.

Marion

How much did you interact?

As the children moved around we talked with them and looking for the right moment to talk with the child about what he/she was doing. Looking for the right moment to add something else and I think those were the keys to it, really. There were some people of course who were coming in and saying, "Oh no!" We know we came in for a bit of flak there was no question about that. I think we worked it through. When we came to see the results we saw how differently the children were coping. Sure there were one or two places where there was little contact between children and staff and I think the staff were seen as being very much in the background.

Freda

Each teacher was applying theory to practice. Some teachers were clearer about the philosophical rationale for what they were doing; for others it was more of a gut reaction that this was a better way to work with children but were not too certain what they were doing. In time too, a so called free play programme became the 'recipe' you were taught and just followed. For some kindergarten teachers, however, it was all too much:

> *One teacher I had working for me thought I was just crazy and asked the Association for a transfer.*
>
> Marion

And there were teachers who just carried on regardless of Miss Gallagher or anyone suggested, as Hester saw when she was a young teacher in the mid 1950s:

> *I was trained in the very formal time when in the North Island there was much more free play, as it used to be called. People looked on this free play as being open slather; that the kids could do what they liked. But in the kindergarten I first went to the timetable still worked around one group outside playing formal games; the other group would be having a story and the other group would be having music and then it would circulate round until everybody washed their hands for morning tea. The children didn't elect what they would do in the same way as they would do today. Incidental learning didn't happen in quite the same way as it does today.*

Despite Hester's experience and much individual variation in how free play programmes were managed, this scenario shows a quite dramatic curriculum transformation in a fairly short period of time. This required a considerable degree of consensus between education policy, theory, and the individual motivation of teachers. This small snapshot scenario of policy and practice in action has many other strands, but captured like this provides many clues to the crux of theoretical debates and political processes in education as they were happening. In this case it shows the complex interplay of 'top down' support (and even direction) with reactions from teachers 'below' ranging from ready enthusiasm to walk out. As a backdrop to the scenario was the lessening of power and influence of the local Kindergarten Associations and Committees; a more interventionist government with some money in hand; kindergarten training programmes now funded by Government; parents moving onto Committees; and the first in service training for teachers. This was leading to the emergence of a more confident group of teachers who seemed less cautious than their predecessors in initiating changes from the grassroots. By the late 1950s teachers like Angela were poised for further change:

> *While the children had a choice, the children didn't actually have an influence in the programme, so if the children had any sort of experience the day before, and came into the kindergarten full of excitement and wanted to express this excitement, well the teachers at that time did not actually pick up on it and structure the programme to build around children's experiences.*

This was a much more pro active view of progressivism to do with rights and autonomy. Some teachers like Angela were later affected by the new political and pedagogical mood of freedom and liberation of the 1960s, and consequently set about testing the limits of necessary order in the kindergarten, and questioning old assumptions. Cumulatively this dissatisfaction became an explosion as teachers like Angela began to dismantle the many unwritten rules of kindergarten programme:

> *We set up the shelves in the storeroom where kids could actually move in and out and decide what sort of junk they wanted. I guess I was empowering kids at that time and allowing kids to make choices. We used to make up just the mixture of starch or cornflower and we gave the children the dyes and paint and they were able to make up their own - they could decide all the colours, so kids were learning. That's when I first introduced being called by my Christian name and that was quite radical in those days.*

This story of grassroots activism is the data of another scenario debate in a later period of time. These scenarios of oral herstory are presented as raw data to reveal the debates as practiced by teachers. In the process of the construction of our historical analysis the debate is the starting point, before being placed in a broader context of known educational theories of the time, set against historical 'texts' that might exist, and also placed alongside events in the wider education sector and viewpoints of teachers in other early childhood services and sectors. The quest is to construct a history of education 'through the eyes of teachers'. We are interested in such questions as where do teachers' ideas come from? How do teachers respond to the smorgasbord of theories to which they are exposed in the course of a life-time? What range of educational ideas have various groups of teachers encountered; What theories or combinations of theories do teachers take on board and which do they reject and why? How do teachers across the different age levels or institutions interpret their role with children and how has this changed through time? Why do some theories and not others 'take' with particular individuals and groups at particular times and in particular settings? And finally, what have the teachers of the past got to say about their experiences and knowledge to the students of today? Can such debates provide a range of 'theories in action' and 'theories in conflict' towards assisting student teachers to appraise their own practice and ideas; to help them formulate, articulate, create and debate their own theoretical positions?

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Early Education and Care

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCARE: QUALITY PROGRAMMES WHICH CARE AND EDUCATE

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There is a widespread international concern currently with delivering high quality early childhood education and care to young children. It is not enough and never has been, to simply provide any early childhood services for children. If we are to make the best use of every country's most precious resource, its children, we must give a lot of care and attention to what we mean by quality, and through whatever means possible, deliver the resources necessary to foster and nurture children's development. It is foolish, both in human and economic terms, to do otherwise. My country has just announced some increases in funding (about $38 million or FIM120 million) for early childhood education. I am delighted with this news and with the accompanying policy they have announced that the funding will be contingent on meeting quality criteria. But it is absolutely crucial that an appropriate way of defining and monitoring quality is devised. This is a critical issue for New Zealand at the moment as it is for many other countries.

I have thought for many years about what constitutes quality and been a proponent of policies which provide incentives for early childhood centres to deliver quality. I do not want to talk today about my political involvement in early childhood education or about the broader structural and regulatable characteristics of quality, but instead to ask you to come with me on a journey which asks some fundamental theoretical questions about development, and how we can define quality contexts for children's development. I will concentrate today on what Bronfenbrenner (1979) calls the microsystem - that is the child's most immediate context for development. I will not talk about the wider context for development, the exosystem and macrosystem - the things which are reflected in the structural qualities of early childhood settings.

My country and yours are very different in the structure of our education and care systems. In New Zealand children start school at 5 years of age and most children enter school at or near the fifth birthday, although school is not compulsory until 6. We have a variety of early childhood services for under five year old children provided by kindergartens, childcare centres, playcentres, family day care, Te Kohanga Reo, and Pacific Island Language nests (the last two centres immerse children in their own language - Maori or a Pacific Island language). All of our 5 to 7 year-old children are in the junior classes of primary schools. I do not want to say any more about structure because I believe that quality early childhood educare can be delivered within very differently structured settings, although structural factors do make a difference. The crucial element of quality that I want to discuss today is the principles which should underlay the interactions between children and other people (both teachers and peers) and the nature of the early childhood curriculum.

Educare

First I want to discuss what I mean by "educare". Early childhood educare is not a new concept. It has been used in the United States (Caldwell, 1991), in the United Kingdom (Calder, 1990; David, 1990; Moss, 1992) in New Zealand (Smith, 1987; Smith & Swain, 1988; Smith, 1988) and probably elsewhere.

The concept of educare is an important one in early childhood because it challenges the view that education and care are separable components of early childhood environments (either in homes or centres). Care, with its connotations of custodial physical caregiving, watching over and affection, has in the past been thought to be quite different from education, which involves planned educational activities designed to enhance children's learning. In many countries it is even assumed that care is something that is important for children under 3 years of age or for children who are away from their parents for a full day (in day care centres) and education is something for pre-school centres or schools for 4 to 7 year-olds to look after. I want to dispute that view and say that it is important for both care and education to be incorporated in all early childhood services, no matter how old the child, whether the context is a centre or a home, or how long the child is away from her parents.

Peter Moss (1992) has also argued against the old divisions between care and education. He finds the word "educare" clumsy but agrees that it carries the appropriate meaning. I believe that we can get used to words which sound clumsy at first - this is how language evolves. (This makes me think back to the arguments in favour or retaining sexist language such as the use of chairperson. If there is a need for a change in thinking then there may need to be a change in language, however unfamiliar and unattractive it may initially sound.)

The prevailing view that care is somehow inferior to education is illustrated in a discussion in Athey's (1990) book. She cites Earwaker's four uses of the word education. The "weakest" (concept A) definition of education refers to custodial care which has connotations of "bringing up" or "rearing" while the strongest (concept D) involves "developing knowledge and understanding in depth and breadth in worth-while directions" (p10). She acknowledges that Concept D amalgamates and includes earlier notions like Concept A. This separation of care and education, however, with knowledge being at the upper end of the scale and care at the lower end, ignores that it is impossible to separate care from education.

The term educare was coined in recognition that for young children there can be no meaningful distinction between care and education. Small children do not easily learn in environments where their physical and emotional well being is not nurtured. Warm, secure and responsive human environments also promote learning and development. Cold, restrictive and unsafe environments retard them. Drummond & Nutbrown (1992) explain that:

> ..the care and education of young children are not two separate activities. In our work as educators, we both care and educate. Quality care is educational, and quality education is caring. Children's enhanced learning and development are the outcomes of our work in whatever setting (p103).

Educare is provided in caring, responsive social contexts where adult-child and child-child interactions and opportunities for play and exploration promote children's social and intellectual development. Educare services are organised, supervised programmes with social and educational goals for children in the temporary absence of their parents.

A Sociocultural Framework for Development in an Educare Perspective

I have argued (Smith, 1992) that it is important for the early childhood field to move towards a more relevant theoretical framework for early childhood educare than the predominantly Piagetian approach which has been part of our history. The whole notion of Developmentally Appropriate Practice, which originated in the United States but has had a strong influence all over the world is founded on an interpretation of Piaget. The concept of DAP assumes universal predictable changes in children's development at particular ages and stages, regardless of context. Such changes in development are taken as the framework within which teachers prepare and plan appropriate curricula and experiences for children (Fleer, 1994). Curriculum materials should be introduced to children only *after* a child has attained a particular level of mental ability (Elkind, 1989). It is assumed that learning comes about through children discovering the world spontaneously through their own self-directed play within a resource-rich environment, with as little as possible intervention from the teacher. The problem with the term "Developmentally Appropriate Practice", is that it implies that children's development guides early childhood centre practice, while in reality early childhood centre practice should guide children's development. This means that teachers should have ideas about the goals of early childhood educare and set about implementing those ideas.

My position is that it is important to give much more attention to the social and cultural context of development and less to the emergence of development from within the individual child without adult participation. I am concerned at the large individual differences in the way which children are capable of spontaneously discovering their environment. Some children do actively explore and find meaning in a resource rich environment, others do not. In my view such differences are not the result of variations in the rate of biologically determined development for which one must wait, but rather of the sensitivity of the social partners and richness of the scripts and events which such children have experienced. If all children are to acquire more understanding of their environment then they need to have adults and peers engage in tasks with them, to extend their understanding through shared experience of relevant scripts and events.

I am uneasy with the idea of building our curricula on normatively based "developmentally appropriate practice" and have moved much more towards a sociocultural perspective. The sociocultural perspective emerged out of Vygotsky's work more than 60 years ago, but was discovered by the West only in the 1960's. Jerome Bruner, David Wood and Michael Cole were some of the psychologists who discovered the relevance of Vygotsky and applied it to problems of education, because above all Vygotsky's theory is a theory of education. Among the many current researchers advocating a sociocultural view are Courtney Cazden, Ellice Forman, and Ronald Gallimore, Barbara Rogoff, Roland Tharp, Jean Valsiner and James Wertsch. There are as yet few writers who have applied the theory to early childhood education. Marilyn Fleer (1991, 1992, 1994) from the University of Canberra has, however, written extensively from this framework and Kathy Sylva and Tricia David from England show sympathy towards it.

I would like to outline what I see as the key principles of sociocultural theory before going on to talk about how to apply these to developing quality early childhood curricula and pedagogy.

Principles Behind Developing Quality Educare Settings:

1. All development begins with social interaction - development consists of the internalization of social processes.

2. Learning drives development rather than development drives learning.
3. Close interpersonal relationships and mutual understanding between social partners facilitates learning and development.
4. The goals of development are culturally determined.
5. Children have an active role in constructing their own unique understanding within the cultural context.

The sociocultural approach emphasizes that thinking is not a characteristic of the child only but of the child-in-social-activities with others (Moll & Whitmore, 1992). The focus is on the sociocultural system within which children learn, which is jointly created by children and adults in an inter-dependent relationship. According to Vygotsky's theory, children participate in cultural activities with skilled partners and come to internalize the tools for thinking they have practiced in social situations.

Vygotsky showed that children could perform much more skillfully together with others than they could alone. He said that until children have acquired competence in developing skills, they require help and supervision. Vygotsky's concept of the *Zone of Proximal Development* is a key one in his theory to education.

> We propose that an essential feature of learning is that it creates the *zone of proximal development*; that is, learning awakens a variety of internal developmental processes that are able to operate only when a child is interacting with people in his environment and in cooperation-operation with his peers. Once these processes are internalized, they become part of the child's independent developmental achievement (Vygotsky, 1978, p90).

Vygotsky made a distinction between the actual developmental level of the child and the zone of proximal development. The zone of proximal development is:

> ..the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (1978, p86).

The ZPD is a dynamic region of sensitivity to learning in which children develop through participation with more experienced members of the culture. It is an area of awakening development. Rogoff (1990) has coined the term "guided participation" to include both the notion of guidance (or scaffolding) and participation in culturally valued activities.

Scaffolding is the guidance and interactional support given by a tutor in the zone of proximal development. Bruner (1985) explains scaffolding as permitting children to do as much as they can by themselves while what they cannot do is filled in by the mother (or other tutor)'s activities. There are differences in the quantity and quality of scaffolding support given to children (Tharp & Gallimore, 1988). The quantity issue refers to how high the scaffold is, at what level and how long it is kept in place, while the quality issue is concerned with the different ways in which help is offered, through directing attention, modeling, asking questions or giving encouragement for example. Ideally children, initially spectators, becomes participants and with the support of an adult learn the rules, grasp the meanings and become able to provide assistance to themselves and control their own behaviour. In the process of learning the tutor provides "a vicarious form of consciousness" (Bruner, 1985) which children take over for themselves after the task has been mastered.

> What the child develops... (is) 'concepts' that are jointly constructed through those that embody them, together with ways of doing and thinking that are cultural practices, recreated with children through processes of formal and informal teaching (Wood, 1986, p95).

Looking at early childhood educare from a sociocultural perspective puts the emphasis right where it should be, on the role of the teacher. Teachers need to be involved in a dynamic interactive relationship with children, not through a didactic approach, but through being sensitively attuned to children's abilities, interests and strengths and being accessible enough to provide scaffolding which extends them and builds bridges between the known and the unknown.

One example of scaffolding in the ZPD given by Greenfield (1984) is of Mexican girls learning to weave. The girls were observed weaving with a teacher (usually the mother or a close relative). Beginners produced woven material that was as skillful as that produced by the expert but this was because the teacher sensitively aided the learners where necessary. At the beginning teachers took over the weaving at more technically difficult parts (e.g. selvaging). In the early learning cycles teachers participated in the weaving about 65 % of the time but in later cycles they did so only 16 % of the time. They tuned their verbal support to the level of the weaver. They gave more verbal commands to the inexperienced weavers and more statements to the experienced ones. As weavers became more experienced, they became increasingly self regulated.

Learning drives Development

Vygotsky viewed matching learning tasks to developmental levels already reached as ineffective. He viewed learning in such situations as lagging behind development rather than stimulating new development (Vygotsky, 1978). The idea of "developmental appropriateness" assumes that learning experiences for children should be designed according to their appropriate stage of development. In our New Zealand system an example of this was the design of a mathematics syllabus which did not introduce numbers larger than 9 until children were at least 7 on the mistaken assumption that younger children could not cope with large numbers. Vygotsky emphasized that teaching had to proceed ahead of development in order to awaken those functions in the process of maturing. Learning is not separable from development and "good learning" is in advance of development. Teaching leads instead of follows children's development. Children may start a task only half understanding it, but by engaging in meaningful goal directed activity with a more skilled partner, they gradually acquire more and more independent understanding. If the teacher is truly working in the child's ZPD she is actually moving the child forward in her understanding, instead of leaving her in the original state. This will probably not occur without the child having an active role and without the adult being sensitive to the child's understanding.

Intersubjectivity - interpersonal relationships

A caring and responsive adult-child (or child-child) relationship is necessary before children can acquire intellectual skills through social interactions. Tutor and learner need to have a shared understanding of the purposes, goals, tools and contexts of the task (McNaughton, 1991) since dialogue is the starting point of thought. Children need to feel comfortable and accepted in their early childhood settings. Rogoff argues that intersubjectivity or a shared focus of understanding and purpose, which is deeply embedded in nurturing and caring relationships, is the foundation of cognitive development. She says that "The traditional distinctions among cognitive, affective and social processes becomes blurred once we focus on thinking" and goes on to quote Vygotsky:

> Thought is not born of other thoughts. Thought has its origins in the motivating sphere of consciousness, a sphere that includes our inclinations and needs, our interests and impulses, and our affect and emotion. The affective and volitional tendency stands behind thought (Vygotsky, 1987, p282).

McNaughton (1991) believes that a failure to establish intersubjectivity poses great difficulties for effective learning. Children and teachers can have very different understandings of what the goals of a task are, or how people should talk together (p140). When tutor and learner achieve intersubjectivity they do not misunderstand each other and contribute reciprocally to the interaction. Children gradually become the initiators. Intersubjectivity is achieved through shared meaning for signs and symbols which develops in the context of interaction over joint activity. It is only through communication within a shared frame of reference that children can internalize and construct their own understandings.

This example from Dorothy White (1954), a librarian mother's, *A Book for Baby* illustrates the mother's ability to see things from her two year-old daughter's point of view in this example:

> Carol could not understand 'Here I am. Alan Richard is my name.' She only understands that when I say 'I', I mean myself; and when she says 'I' she means herself. She cannot grasp an 'I" referring to a third party, the boy in the book. Carol sees this as, 'Here is a little boy. This is his Daddy.' The text therefore requires constant modification.

Situations where the teacher has no real knowledge or understanding of children do not provide fertile ground for quality educare programmes. I am very concerned about the children who receive very little teacher attention, the so-called "invisible children" with whom there has been no intersubjectivity at all established. Waterhouse (1995) has recently reported an interesting study of how teachers construct their knowledge of children's identity in the beginning years of school. Teachers knowledge of children's identity was shown through a series of interviews and videos done over 4 years. Waterhouse showed that many children came into the category of "average" children who conformed to classroom activity to such a degree that they became invisible to the teacher. So despite a child-centred commitment to individualism, the reality was that there were many children who were on the margins of teacher attention. These children were not really perceived as a problem or as special - they probably survived in the classroom but how much did they learn. If we acknowledge the importance of adult/child intersubjectivity it is important for teachers to get to know every child.

One problem with the concept of intersubjectivity is that it has often been interpreted as something that can only develop within one-to-one situations, although Young-Loveridge, Carr & Peters (1995) found that 4 year-old experts at number (compared to novices) spent much more time either in pairs with an adult or in small groups with an adult. Intersubjectivity can develop in small classroom groups where there is a possibility for people to work together informally on common goals in a consistent way so that they can get to know each other. Developing intersubjectivity requires an active attempt by teachers to diagnose and observe what children understand and do not understand because it is the task of the teacher to bridge the gap between the known and the unknown. Teachers are usually better able to sensitively observe and interpret children's behaviour when they know them well and are engaged in reciprocal activities with them, rather than in a distant, controlling, formal and hierarchical relationship. The best contexts are where children reveal understandings so that teachers can develop, extend, correct or improve these.

> The underlying principle is that the more informal the learning environment, the greater the teacher's access to the learners' representations, understandings and misunderstandings (Katz & Chard, 1990, p44).

But Katz & Chard argue for optimal informality. Too much informality can occur in some settings. Teachers who "supervise" large groups with the children engaged in largely undirected free play are in a poor position to achieve intersubjectivity with children. They are unable to engage with children in the sort of sustained way that is necessary for learning in the ZPD to occur. They are too busy with other demands on their attention to achieve any kind of joint focus with children.

Young-Loveridge et al (1995) provide a very interesting running record of a number novice child who is unable to count beyond 3 and counts "one, two, eight". The teacher in a busy kindergarten starts to work with her on a counting sequence in the context of a computer game, but the telephone rings so the teacher asks some of the other more expert children to help the novice child. The other children do help for a while but they gradually take over the game, the novice child quietly loses interest in the game and moves on to another activity. There are countless such examples of missed opportunities within settings where the teacher is not able to work on a sustained basis with one or a small number of children, and children never get to solve the problem or move forward in their thinking.

Teachers need to know what children can do and understand. They must be acutely observant and aware in order to effectively create appropriate learning activities in the ZPD. Drummond and Nutbrown (1992) write of an interesting study by Prosser where children make assessments of themselves and are aware of other people's assessment of them. Children from an early age can contribute to the process of assessment. They are a partner in the process of assessing their learning. Drummond and Prosser see careful observation as an essential tool for teachers, to illuminate the future and improve the present. It can help to identify "the learning that is about to take place" (p90).

Culturally Determined Goals

I believe that for years we, in early childhood, have had the mistaken belief that we could discover the goals of development by looking at the child. I have been as guilty as anyone of this mistaken view. In 1988 I said that early childhood education should not have curriculum goals, it should have developmental goals. What I really meant was a restatement of the DAP philosophy that by looking at what children are able to do we should encourage them to do what "normally" comes next in the stages of development. We have deluded ourselves that the child we see is an isolated individual, independent of her social context. By looking at children within our particular cultural context, we are really looking at a version of ourselves, already strongly influenced by our joint cultural heritage.

According to Rogoff (1992): "Each community's valued skills constitute the local goals of development" p233). She sees development as multidirectional rather than as aimed at specific endpoints. To the extent that we share physical and biological features as a species there are some commonalties across cultures but child development involves appropriation of the intellectual tools and skills of the surrounding cultural community. Rogoff sees development as transformation in thinking which comes about as a response to participation in the problems of everyday life. The richer, more meaningful and the more active is children's participation in diverse activities, the greater the repertoire of social and cognitive skills that they will acquire.

To understand development it is essential to understand cultures. Traditionally in Western cultures, skill in academic activities involving scientific, literate and numerate activities are those that are valued. It is important to realize these skills are valued within particular cultural frameworks rather than a necessary endpoint to be aspired to be all cultures. Cultures vary in their institutions, their technologies and their other cultural tools. One of the most powerful cultural tools is language but we should not forget other non verbal forms of communication according to Rogoff (1990). Bahktin's (Wertsch, 1990) theory suggests that children learn cultural concepts, values and ideas as they learn language but they do have an individual input or interpretation. He described words as being "half ours and half someone else's". Vygotsky (1978) said "Just as the mold gives shape to a substance, words can shape an activity into a structure". So language itself is an important medium for transferring cultural content.

In Western type early childhood education, we have valued play as a way of allowing children to explore spontaneously. Yet David (1992) points out that even play is affected by culture. She discusses the English tradition of Susan Isaacs and the Nursery Schools Association which valued play. In a discussion with Danish pre-school staff, she asked whether the staff would help children set up a hairdresser's shop with appointment books, invoices etc. She was told that these activities were part of societal pressure on children into accepting literacy. Is this not an example of refusing to acknowledge that early childhood settings have a role in passing on culturally valued skills.? I would certainly acknowledge that the values passed on should not always be those of the dominant culture, but surely we must acknowledge and celebrate that early childhood programmes transmit cultural values.

Rogoff (1992) found in her study of US and Mayan toddlers that when children interact with adults it is in the context of adult work rather than play. Play is seen as the domain for peer interaction and Mayan mothers were embarrassed by the idea of playing with their children. US mothers were on the other hand very friendly and playful with their children. In New Zealand, Maori Language Nests or Nga Kohanga Reo do not accept the predominantly European emphasis on play within their centres. Culturally valued styles and values, such as whanaungatanga, awhina, tuakana-teina relationships as well as the Maori language were implicit in the programme (Hohepa, Smith, Smith & McNaughton, 1991). For example children learn about their whakapapa, first their immediate family and later their hapu and iwi (tribal and sub-tribal) link. They practice mihimihi, a formal mode of self introduction, traditional in Maori culture. The Kohanga Reo setting provides a rich context for the negotiation of shared meanings within a primarily Maori context.

I am not arguing against play being an integral part of the early childhood curriculum. Indeed Vygotsky was a great advocate of play (he really meant collaborative imaginative play) because he believed that play liberated children from situational constraints and allowed them to experiment with meaning. In Vygotsky's view, play creates a zone of proximal development for the child. I do, however, agree with David's point that there are other valuable contexts for learning besides play. Involvement in joint collaborative goal directed activity with adults or peers over culturally valued activities, such as laying the table or baking a cake, can also provide a rich context for learning.

The lesson that I take from the sociocultural perspective on the curriculum is that we need to acknowledge that we have culturally determined goals in early childhood education settings. It is time to admit that these do not come solely from within the child and to work together with parents in making more explicit and public the shared goals which underlay our early childhood programmes. In New Zealand for the first time in the last few years we have codified an early childhood curriculum in a written form as a way to guide and support early childhood teachers in their work. Goals for early childhood are a value issue but these values have often in the past been implicit rather than explicit. They should be flexible rather than rigid, able to be modified with social circumstances, to be responsive to the views of parents and the wider community and take into account multicultural participants in early childhood settings not just the dominant cultural group. There also needs to be room for local variations depending on the particular social, economic and cultural context of the early childhood setting. I am opposed to the whole world following the US DAP model, though I acknowledge that there is much that is shared and valuable. Indeed I am always rather astonished at the degree of common ground I find when I meet people in international forums. I like the approach taken by the Australian Accreditation scheme, where there have been more than 50 criteria of quality early childhood education developed through extensive consultation and (let's be honest!) looking at overseas models like the DAP. But the individual centre is encouraged to develop 10 local criteria which are of particular relevance to their own centre.

Children's Active Role

The ZPD sometimes conjures up visions of children as the passive recipients of an adult's didactic efforts (Packer, 1992). Internalization of social interaction does not mean that skills and information from outside the child are simply transferred to inside the child! Children do not passively absorb the strategies of the adult. They take an active inventive role and reconstruct the task through their own understanding. This process has been called "guided reinvention" by Tharp and Gallimore (1988). Teaching is not seen as the transmission of knowledge but as a process of sharing meanings and understandings. Children themselves take an important role in these negotiations about meaning (David, 1992). Rogoff (1990) also stresses the active participation of children in their own development:

> Children seek, structure, and even demand the assistance of those around them in learning how to solve problems of all kinds. They actively observe social activities, participating as they can. I stress the complementary roles of children and caregivers in fostering children's development (p 16).

Rogoff (1990) also shows how children's creativity can develop within sociocultural contexts. She says that social processes do not necessarily foster reproduction of knowledge. In the process of acquiring skills and information the child transforms them. When children are involved in social interaction they ignore some aspects of the situation and participate in others and they change what they participate in to suit their uses. Creativity builds on existing ideas and technologies within existing institutions. Creativity involves forging new connections and reformulating existing ideas. Collaborative and dialogic involvement of people working on similar issues is a rich context for creativity.

> Individuals transform culture as they appropriate its practices, carrying them forward to the next generation in altered form to fit the needs of their particular generation and circumstances (Rogoff, 1990, p198).

Conclusion

I would like to conclude by talking about the critical role of the teacher and of a well thought out early childhood curriculum in providing high quality early childhood programmes. I believe that it is important for teachers have a rationale for their activities, or if you like a pedagogy. Teachers always have a pedagogy, whether it is conscious or unconscious (Athey, 1990). My argument is that a pedagogy should be conscious - that teachers should know what they are doing, why they are doing it and be able to reflect in a collaborative way with colleagues and parents about the success of their programmes. This is part of being a professional early childhood educarer.

I do not want to prescribe anyone's pedagogy, but my preference is for a pedagogy which acknowledges the awesome power of the teacher in affecting children's development and an understanding that if teachers observe children, understand their cultural framework and develop close relationships with them, and informally interact with them over planned activities allowing active participation of the child, they will have much more power for positive change. If the teacher is aware of the need to take advantage of every opportunity to support learning, then there will be far fewer missed opportunities and more potential for positive change.

Secondly I am a strong advocate of a curriculum which leads rather than follows child development. Every society needs to work out for itself what it values and wants to encourage in its early childhood programmes. The nature of good quality early childhood educare is a value issues (Moss & Pence, 1994). There are infinite possibilities for development but as Lillian Katz (1990) says, just because children **can** do things does not mean it that they **should** be doing them. We should not all blindly follow U.S. practice and model Developmentally Appropriate Practice. Each society need to carefully, consciously and inclusively consider what kind of activities are worthwhile for children to be participating in and what kind of skills and dispositions we want our children to have. We have started on that process in New Zealand. The curriculum should not be inflexible, but should stimulate teachers and parents to collaborate and reflect on how to enrich children's development. I am not talking about the didactic transmission of pre-formulated knowledge but, as Gordon Wells (1985) describes it, an attempt to negotiate shared meanings and understandings with children so that children can themselves shape the sequencing and pattern of their education.

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CHILDREN'S CREATIVITY IN THE PRESCHOOL INSTITUTIONS IN MACEDONIA

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Introduction

Lately, the problem of creativity has acquired a greater importance and vitality in all areas of man's activities. Creativity has been studied from different positions not only because of the various engagements and cognition of researchers what it should represents, but also because of its manifold nature. Nevertheless, the psychological aspects of this problem are the ones that have been generally studied. The research reported on this article focused on the field of educational work. The presumptions significant for the development of child's creativity have been investigated at the very first level of education realised in preschool institutions.

There does not exist a worked-out strategy for developing children's creativity, in our country. Neither can we say that there is a tradition in the preparation of such preschool programmes. The incomplete theoretical rudiments and the underdeveloped research work in this area indicate the significance of this research and the need of introducing a whole range of further research of the genre.

First of all, it was the theoretical analysis of the problem that led us to answers like: what kind of social conditions are convenient for creativity, what kind of social climate is incentive, and what are the mechanisms that can encumber or cancel the production of imaginative ideas. Raising creative people is possible in tolerant society where there is a dialogue with the individual, where the material conditions for backing up the research work are existing, and in society in which science, culture, and art are adequately appraised.

Society endeavouring for top-quality development must be flexible and fast in accepting and implementing innovations in practice, in assisting research and development units, in undertaking activities and measures with the aim of supporting and awarding creative individuals. The first steps of this kind should be done in the sphere of education. The hitherto preferring of mediocrity and collective spirit placed the creative persons, the talented children in an unjust position. The "exceptional" children have the right to an "exceptional" curriculum and they must not be left to chance. Therefore, it is necessary to work out a strategy that will help detecting, identifying, following, stimulating, and supporting them in their development, starting from the very beginning of their education - preschool education.

Theoretical frame of the study

There have been numerous attempts for defining creativity, for uncovering the essence of the creative process, as well as for identifying the characteristics of the creative persons throughout ages. Various assessments have been distinguished - starting from the oldest religious mystical interpretations of creativity as a characteristic of gods and a few elected individuals of mankind, up to some modern theories based on more human positions. Here are a few examples for defining creativity as a result of various research:

> "The ability to see the new relation ships, to produce unusual ideas and to deviate from traditional pattern of thinking." (Eysenck, 1972)
>
> "...mental processes that lead to solutions, ideas, conceptualization, artistic forms, theories or products that are unique and novel." (Reber, 1985)
>
> "According to wider criteria from the above mentioned .... you may speak about creative thinking and creative work after one has reached certain solutions that are not mere copies of previous one's own or someone else's opinions, therefore they do not have to be of general social value" (Potkonjak and Simlesa, 1989)

Apart from the present differences in the standpoints of the current researchers in creativity, there still is a *common* feature in modern understanding of creativity, that is to say it is treated as a natural, generic and universal characteristic. That is the optimistic belief that each individual possesses a certain creative potential, smaller or greater, given to him as inheritance but the degree and method of its development depend on the surrounding conditions. Therefore, creativity, alike intelligence, is the dimension apportioned within the framework of a certain mediocrity with the major part of population. People who are extraordinary gifted "creators" are of a relatively small number, and there is a relatively low number of people with an exclusively low degree of it. In congruence with this assessment we have also defined creativity as a general characteristic of the human being that helps him to behave, to contemplate and to create in his own, original way.

Creativity appears in early childhood and it is definitely influenced by several factors: the interest of the parents for improving this characteristic, their tolerance, the conditions and the relations in the family, the personality of the educator in the preschool institution and undoubtedly, the presence of suitable educational programmes for such kind of work with preschool children.

The design and methods of the study

The object of the research were the conditions for the development of creativity in children in preschool institutions. We have used numerous categories in examining and defining the conditions for creative work:

1. Characteristics of the curriculum: stiff, elastic, it narrows or it broadens the possibilities for creative work;
2. Definition of the goals: clear, specific, operational, measurable or typical, long-termed, stereotypical;
3. The number, presence and location of goals, tasks and contents of a creative character in the programmes of separate educational domains;
4. Organisation of educational process in preschool institutions: elastic, stiff, more liberated or rigid daily administration, grouping of children strictly according to age or according to other more elastic criterion, position of the child in the activities, the selection of activities and their timetable;
5. The style of work of the teacher: democratic, authoritarian, anarchy, flexible, rigid, tolerant, the forms and methods of applied work;
6. Material prerequisites: space and equipment, modern or classical means;
7. Activities of the children: creative and uncreative, verbal, non-verbal, creative games and work, researching activities, practical manipulation, passive receptiveness of impressions;
8. Social and emotional relations between the educators and the children: mutual confidence, equality, spontaneity, tenderness, understanding, support, fear, insecurity, shame;
9. The attitude of the educators in relation to children's creativity, their knowledge and motivation for a creative work with the children;

Congruent to the set goals and tasks, a number of research techniques was used in the research:

1. Content analysis of the official Programme of the Educational Activities for Preschool Education (Ilporpama, 1982), which revealed the quantity and quality of the program
2. Objectives and contents convenient for creative work; (5 preparing groups)

3. Systematic observation of the educational process in preschool institutions, defining the presence of creative activities with children and teachers in the current educational process in kindergartens, as well as the conditions for its realization, outlining the specific characteristics of the organisation, the forms and methods of work in free and directed activities (108 teachers)
4. Survey research by questioning and grading the attitudes, opinions and judgements of the teachers related to separate components of children's creativity.

In our research we started from the general hypothesis that optimal conditions for the development of children's creativity had not been provided in institutional preschool education. We confirmed this general hypothesis through the verification of a number of particular hypothesis.

The results

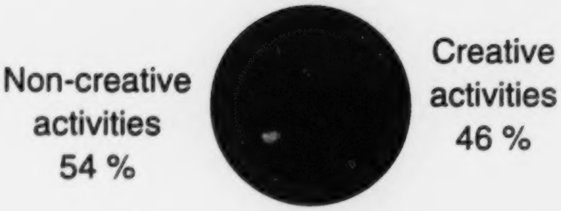
The quantity and quality of Content Analysis

The analysis of the contents of the Programme confirmed our hypothesis on the scant presence of assignments and contents suitable for creative work of children and teachers. Using a specially constructed memo pad for the analysis we came to know the general characteristics of the Programme in a sense that it is exceedingly universal, stereotypical and inoperational. Moreover, we obtained information on the presence of concrete programme tasks and contents in the function of creativity within the framework of separate educational domains. Firstly, a priority was put on the games and free activities, which is positive and significant, especially concerning the development of creative features. A number of creative and constructive games and plays have been comprised. However, there is a completely different situation in the six programme domains which represent a kind of precursor of elementary foundations of the subjects studied at the elementary schools. Only the domains of linguistic culture, the studies of music and arts, have a sufficient number of assignments in favour of creativity; there are some general notions in the domain of nature study, while there are almost none in the domains of mathematics and gymnastics. This should not lead to the conclusion that the mentioned domains do not have possibilities for creative activation of children. On the contrary, both of them are rich with contents of creative work. Therefore, in the future, the authors of the programmes should emphasise not only the objectives and assignments but also the methods and ways for making the children creative. This is particularly necessary in the domain of mathematics, because it is more abstract, more subtle, and greater knowledge and professionalism are required from the teacher for its realization.

Obviously, the programme has greater influence on the practical organisation and realization of the educational process in the preschool institutions, because by systematic observation of the free and directed activities, we got results which were mainly compatible with the previous ones. Systematic observation helped us to get direct insight in the substantial reality of pedagogy and in the conditions that promote and manifest children's creativity. All observations were done with the help of specially constructed records of the check-list type which contained categories of behaviour of the educators and the children relevant to the research-problem. The sample of the preschool institutions under observation had the characteristics of a simple random sample. On an average, five preparing groups from five preschool institutions in the Republic were observed. The records for mapping out the free and directed activities were not identical because of the specific features of the one and the other type of activities. Both forms contained tables and columns which had to reveal the organization, the presence and the types of educational situations in which the children were engaged in creative activities, the applied methods and forms, as well as the social and emotional relations between the teachers and children in the group.

The objectives and contents for creative work-observation

The analyses of the results obtained with systematic observation confirmed two hypotheses of the research: first, the creative activities of the children and the educators are not present enough in the process of education in preschool institutions, and second, the conditions, the possibilities for making the children creative, are more appropriate in the free than in the directed activities.



According to the data presented on the graph, approximately half of the time for directed activities, or more exactly in 54.5 % of the cases, the children are creatively active, they do research or demonstrate their creativity verbally.

Table 1. Types of Children's Directed Activities.

DIRECTED ACTIVITIES	%
Non-creative Activities	45.5
Verbal Creative Activities	32.2
Creative Work	11.3
Creative Games	8.6
Research Activities	2.4

Information on Tab. 1 indicates the fact that the greatest percentage of children's creative activities is in the verbal domain, which comprise various exercises for children's verbal creativity. That is also in concordance with the teachers' attitudes that the linguistic culture domain (along with art education) encloses a great number of programmes and real possibilities for the development of children's creativity. Besides moderate presence of creative work and creative games, there is also extremely low presence of researching activities by the children (only 2.4 % of the total activities). The researching activities help the child to come to its own discoveries and new proficiencies. They urge curiosity, develop observing abilities, systematization, breed original thinking and independence. These are, de facto, good enough reasons for greater presence of researching activities in the creative work of the children. The systematic observation of children's free activities in the preschool institutions indicated that they offered better conditions for making the children creative, compared to the directed activities. Graphic representation 2 indicates the relation between the creative and non-creative children's activities within the framework of free activities:

The results indicate that there is little advantage in favour of the creative activities. Although the 57.8 % presence of creative activities can't be considered sufficient, nevertheless the correlation between creative and non-creative is more in favour of the free than of the directed activities.

The creative activities of the children within the framework of free activities are much more abundant. As shown in Tab. 2, the most frequent types of free activities are the constructive games of the children with shaped and semi-shaped materials (26.8 %).

Table 2. Types of Children's Free Activities

FREE ACTIVITIES	%
Non-creative Activities	42.2
Constructive games	26.8
Art and Modelling	12.2
Discussion	5.4
Dramatisation	5.3
Narration	4.5

Artistic creation is of a relatively high percentage, as well as modelling (12.2 %); numerous varieties of verbal creative activities have been noticed, for instance: dramatization (5.3 %), listening to stories and narration (4.5 %), plays (3.5 %), and so on. The present 42.2 % cases of free activities and the 45.5 % of directed activities in which the children are not creatively active, as well as the information that 2-9 % of the children are totally unengaged and are simply "quiet", prove our hypothesis about insufficient creative activities.

The other data obtained with the form refer to the ways, the methods used by the teacher, in relation to the position of the child and its possibility of deciding on the choice, the type of the activity it wants to be engaged in, the choice of means, space and playmate, as well as the data on the social and emotional relations between the teachers and the children. They were all in favour of the hypothesis that the conditions for making the children creative are more favourable in the area of free than in the area of directed activities. As an illustration we can present the information that in the directed activities there has nearly been no case when the teacher gives up the plan due to momentary desires of the children, his (the educator's) domination is, more over, expressed in the choice of the means and space for play. The children are left the possibility of choosing the playmate only. In free activities the situation is much more favourable. The leading role is left to the children, and in most cases they are independent in the decision making about the type of the activity, the means they want to play with, and their playmate.

The attitudes of the teachers - a survey

The third objective of the research was to examine the attitudes of the kindergarten teachers toward creativity. In the survey we used a stratified random sample. The questionnaires were applied to 108 teachers from four towns in the Republic of Macedonia: Skopje (central district and the suburb district of Gazi Baba), Bitola (western Macedonia), Stip and Radovis (eastern Macedonia). The sample referred to 15.43 % of the total number of teachers in Macedonia.

The sample is comprised of relevant categories of population of different educational degree and different working experience. With the help of the questionnaires-scalers, we came to data about the opinions and attitudes of the teachers regarding several issues, such as the following:

- the importance of diverse factors in the development of children's creativity and their influence;
- preferences in the style of work by the teachers;
- motives for accepting the creative style of work;
- the degree of teacher's ability for creative work;
- the results obtained by the creative teachers;
- the conditions and the possibilities for practical realization of new ideas, the difficulties and obstacles they are facing;
- the possibilities offered in the programme, the objective conditions for the realization of
- the programme tasks concerning of creativity, and so on.

From all the information and perception we got with the research, we shall single out a smaller part directly related to our hypotheses.

First of all, the hypotheses about the positive attitude of the teachers toward the phenomenon - children's creativity.

Table 3. Teacher's Attitudes Toward Children's Creativity.

CREATIVITY OF THE PRE-SCHOOLCHILDREN	%
Positive	97.2
Negative	0.9
Unknown	1.8

Up to 97.2 % of those questioned gave a positive answer to the question whether it is at all possible to talk about the creativity of preschool children, and only 0.92 % gave a negative answer, while 1.85% answered they did not know whether there is such a feature at the preschool age. These data are not only in favour of the hypothesis, they also indicate the optimism of the teachers that creativity exists, which presents a condition and a motive for fostering and urging it up.

The hypothesis that a majority of the teachers prefer the creative style of work was also confirmed.

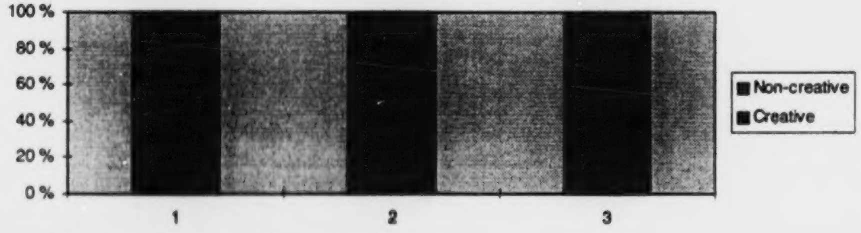
Table 4. The Style of Work Preferred by the Teachers.

PREFERRED STYLE OF WORK	%
Creative	69.4
Traditional	30.5

In concordance with the obtained data seven tenths or 69.44 % of the teachers preferred the creative, innovative style of work, while 30.55 % practise the traditional style. Although the creative ones are in majority, there is a high percentage of those who stick to the conservative, traditional style of work. This fact speaks for itself about the insufficient modernisation of pedagogy and the modern educational goals. In analysing the conditions of the attitudes of those questioned we came to a conclusion that the teachers with a higher education degree mostly prefer the creative style of work. The results are given in the graphic representation:

Table 5. The style of work of the teachers and their education degree.

PREFERRED STYLE OF WORK	DEGREE OF EDUCATION		
	intermediate	high	university
Creative	37.5	70.9	6.2
Traditional	62.5	29.1	23.8



1. Educators with intermediate education
2. Educators with high education
3. Educators with university education

According the data, the first category of intermediate teachers, which represents slightly over one third of the questioned (37.5 %), prefer the creative style, and almost two thirds prefer the traditional. It is vice versa with the teachers with high education, because 70.88 % of them prefer the creative, and 29.11 % the traditional style. It is even more expressed with the university level teachers. Three quarters or 76.19 % of the teachers prefer the creative, and slightly less than one quarter or 23.81 % prefers the traditional (conservative) style.

The data are in favour of the theoretical and empirical knowledge that teachers with less education don't decide easily for anything new and unheard-off while those with a higher level of education more often practise the inventive, creative pedagogy. It means that one of the conditions for fostering creativity in preschool institutions is to provide university degree education for teachers in preschool education.

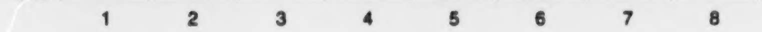
The calculations demonstrated that the difference is not statistically important. By *linking* the categories of high and university level the difference is significant on the level 0.05. The calculations are as follows

X2= 4,16

X2 0,05 (m=l) = 3,85

As regards the motives for creative work, the assumption that the inner (intrinsic) motives prevail with the teachers was confirmed. The ranking of the answers given by those questioned gave the following results:

MOTIVES



1. To match the scientific discoveries in education
2. To develop and simulate creativity in their pupils
3. Personal desire and inspiration
4. Meeting the requests of the society
5. Work can be thus promoted
6. Factors of the kindergartens
7. The others work in such a way
8. Getting acknowledgment

The primary motive of the majority number of those questioned, that is 62.04 %, was "the wish to match the scientific discoveries in educational work". On the second place (47.22 %) was the teachers' motive to develop and stimulate creativity in their pupils. On a close third place (45.37 %) was the motive for looking for something new and different based on the personal desires and inspirations of the teachers. After that, there came the motives for meeting the requests of society (25,00 %), the belief that the work can be thus promoted (23.15 %), and the requests made by the factors of the kindergartens represented a motive for 12.04 % of those questioned. In our opinion the belief that creative work leads to good results should, as a motive reach a higher position, and it should not drag behind the motives for meeting the demands of society.

The scarce presence of extrinsic motives demonstrates that the times of introducing innovations for the sake of appraisals and acknowledgements or as a kind of competition between colleagues-teachers, have past.

With the survey of the opinions and attitudes of the teachers we found more about the problem of creativity. For instance, the teachers gave different assessments about the role of separate factors in the development of children's creativity. They gave the primary importance to the factor of inheritance, that is the natural talent. Then the surrounding factors ranked as follows: family, teacher, surroundings, radio and television broadcast, and picture books as the least important factor. The ranking list about the difficulties the teachers face in fulfilling creative work with the children was as follows: bad equipment in preschool institutions, lack of professional assistance from competent institutions, and bad (insufficient) information.

The most significant sources used by the teachers in their creative work with the children are the professional pedagogic literature, the organised forms of advanced professional training and exchange of experience with the colleagues. Less important and scarce information sources for creative work, according to the opinion of the teachers are regular schooling and mass media (radio, television, press).

Conclusions

The research diagnosed several weak points in the present system of preschool education, thus some possible directions were indicated for its alteration. First of all, it is necessary to revise the Programme by renouncing the declarative, stereotypical objectives, and to introduce contents suitable for creative work in the programmes of all areas. It is also necessary to innovate the educational process in relation to its position, organization, timetable of activities, forms and methods of work, and the third, and perhaps the most important matter is to instruct professional teachers for creative pedagogy work starting from regular schooling onwards throughout their whole working years.

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QUALITY SCIENCE INVESTIGATION IN THE EARLY YEARS

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This paper addresses the issue of what constitutes quality science investigation through the perspective of a small scale action research involving year one (5-6 year old) children. For too long quality has been in the eye of the beholder and it is time for the professionals to come to a shared perspective and commitment to clarify what quality means in terms of teaching processes and observable learning outcomes. West-Burnham's (1992) eight point synthesis offers a useful framework to develop in the context of one's own establishment.

1. Quality is defined by the customer, not the supplier.
2. Quality consists of meeting stated needs, requirements and standards.
3. Quality is achieved through continuous improvement, by prevention, not detection.
4. Quality is driven by senior management but it is an equal responsibility of all those involved in any process
5. Quality is measured by statistical methods - the 'cost of quality' is the cost of non-conformity. Communicate with facts.
6. Quality has to pervade human relationships in the work place; teams are the most powerful agent for managing quality.

7. Quality can be achieved only by a valued work force; education, training and personal growth are essential to this.
8. Quality has to be the criterion for reviewing every decision, every action and every process.

(West-Burnham, 1992)

While many teachers may feel uneasy with the terminology of models and managerialism borrowed from industry, it has been established that all teachers are in fact managers (Lofthouse, 1994; Day et al, 1993; Bennett et al, 1984; Ball, 1987). A closer study of the total quality management (TQM) domain (the client-centred approach), points very much nearer to the child-centred philosophy of primary education. But in order to understand your clients or customers or children/pupils, West-Burnham (1992) asserts that you need information about their values, attitudes, educational level, expectations, preferences, social situation and commitment. For these reasons alone, the meaning of quality needs to be defined, refined and focused in terms of children needs, wants and aspirations. Central to this debate about quality and TQM is the role played by the senior managers. 'In order to achieve quality in learning, there has to be quality in management' (Lofthouse, 1994).

So what is quality Science? This can only be answered if we can draw parallels to what constitutes good primary practice. 'First hand experience and exploration of objects is the main aim of teaching Science to the infants' (Harlen, 1985). Through first hand experience and purposeful play, children are motivated to learn, develop a sense of enquiry and they start to develop and consolidate skills and concepts. They learn to communicate and cooperate and begin to learn to differentiate between fact and fiction.

It is in this context of explorations and investigations, set within everyday experience of children, that we enable children to develop investigative skills and understanding of Science. However, the 'immediacy and relevance of spontaneously generated activities' should not be ruled out (National Curriculum Council, 1990). What is important in developing Scientific awareness is the - search for truth - the sense of wonder at the world - the sense of identity with the world' (Bronowski, 1959). 'This search for truth is innate in us all, young as well as old' (Richards, 1982).

Through investigations and experimentation children are making sense of the world through direct experience and they are 'refining, reinforcing and readjusting their own perceptions' (The Curriculum 3-5, Warwickshire County Council, 1989). So how can we foster the development of a lively and inquiring interest in Science and how will this be related to the everyday world around the child? Areas of experience which enable the child to explore actively, to observe closely and to utilise the appropriate language register make for a good quality start. Equally important is the role of teacher's use of language (Bennett and Kell, 1989) and what constitutes quality learning activities (Balageur et.al., 1992). Greater emphasis is needed in encouraging children to question, argue, make decisions, find solutions and communicating about events. Science allows ample opportunities for children to extend their power of discovery and seeking for relationships and applications as they explore their imaginative and real environment.

Finding evidence for what constitutes effective learning in young children is difficult (Rodger, 1994). We know something about the development of thought through the work of Piaget and others but it is important that effective learning and assessment are well grounded in systematic observation (Harlen, 1995; Alexander et.al., 1992). Care is needed to prevent the trap of 'missing completely what it is that children are learning because we are so entranced with what we want them to learn' (Drummond, 1990). In order to measure the quality of learning in the early years, educators must monitor the quality of learning experiences by noting: 'what are the children doing?; what are the adults doing?; what does the learning environment look like? and how do plans and policies support early education?' (adapted from Northern Group of Advisers, 1992). I would argue that models of effective management (plan, act, review) need to be in place so that it ensures quality learning goes on. In industrial and commercial management practice this tension is being increasingly recognised and is exemplified in the move from quality control to quality assurance (West-Burnham, 1994).

The fundamentals of quality assurance are meeting specifications through a system designed to ensure prevention. The underlying principle is one of conformance to specification and management systems should be established which allow this. 'Quality assurance is a management system designed to control activities at all stages - to prevent quality problems and ensure only conforming products reach the customer. The key features of an effective quality assurance system are:

a) an effective quality management system;

b) periodic audit of the operation of the system;

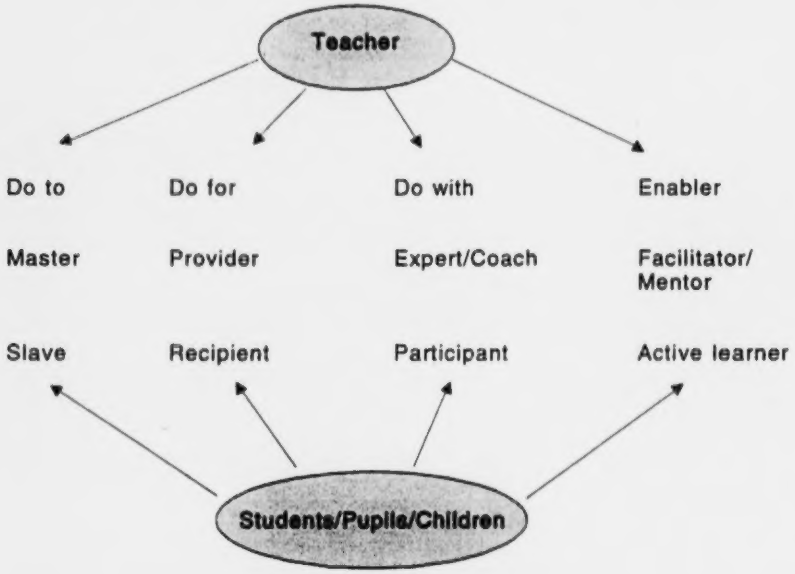
c) periodic review of the system to ensure it meets changing requirements' (Munro-Faure and Munro-Faure, 1992).

The role of the teacher is important in knowing what kind of intervention, how often and how sensitively it is appropriate to move the learning on. 'Simply providing sand, climbing frame and a butterfly garden does not mean that children will learn about maths, movement or natural science - the important thing for teachers to remember is, how will the provision be used to serve the child and how the teacher to bring the child further' (Bruce, 1987). As teachers and classroom assistants, we need to continuously evaluate the learning opportunities offered to children so that effective, quality teaching and learning becomes everyone's business.

Teachers are currently facing increasing pressures from different sectors of the community regarding what they teach and how they teach. 'A critical gaze is now being cast by politicians and parents on how teachers relate to their pupils, in terms of both teaching styles and learning outcomes (Lofthouse, 1994). It would be an interesting exercise to debate about, based on the model shown on the next page, regarding the role of the teacher within an individual school/kindergarten or nursery.

Figure 1. The role of the teacher.

(adapted from West-Burnham, 1992)


Teacher
Do to
Do for
Do with
Enabler
Master
Provider
Expert/Coach
Facilitator/ Mentor
Slave
Recipient
Participant
Active learner
Students/Pupils/Children

However, in the context of this paper, it is significant that a teacher acting as enabler, facilitator and mentor creates the conditions for active learning. This 'doing' and being actively involved are the very foundations of good practice for teaching young children.

A small scale research I recently undertook, assisted by a third year B.Ed. student on her school experience gave a useful insight into quality teaching and learning within the context of a good Science investigation with year one (5-6 year old) children. The account of the findings are reproduced here. She managed the assessment opportunity by being analytical, systematic, objective and focused in her observation. Evidence gained by this method allowed for mapping the conceptual development, skill level, knowledge and attitude of the small sample group.

Year one scientific investigation of Food

The emphasis of both activities was the process of close observation at a basic level, which allowed each child to spend time studying each of the food items.

The observation of the kiwis and lychees encouraged the children to use descriptive words to explain the colour, texture and the composition of the fruits. This could then be reinforced with close observational drawings.

Similarly, the noodle activity involved observation of the food, but there was a closer emphasis upon the difference between uncooked and cooked noodles, and the predictions of the cooking process.

The activities were carried out in groups of approximately six children, under the supervision and direction of an adult. On both occasions, the children were seated at a table and were presented with the food. They were able to touch and observe each item and transmit any part of their observation to the group and/or to the teacher. Individuals were encouraged to extend their observations and thinking by questioning and by further study of the dissected fruit and the noodles.

The objectives of the activities were as follows:

1(a) For children to closely observe the appearance of the kiwi and lychee fruit, describing the recognisable components of each.

1(b) For children to pose and respond to questions concerning the appearance of the fruit.

2(a) For children to closely observe the appearance ofuncooked and cooked noodles.

2(b) For children to describe the difference between uncooked and cooked noodles.

2(c) For children to predict the change which occurs when noodles are placed in boiling water.

Some of the questions posed were:

Child: *What's inside? (the kiwi)*
Adult: *Let's cut it open and find out.*
Child: *Can you eat these? (the seeds of the kiwi and lychee).*
Adult: *You can eat the kiwi seeds but not the lychee stone.*
Child: *What do we have to do to cook the noodles?*
Adult: *We have to pour boiling water over them, so we must be very careful. What do you think will happen to them if they are put in water?*
Child: *They'll go soft.*

Assessment of the observation of the noodle activity

The focus of the assessment was to discover whether the children could identify the noodles and /or use appropriate language to describe the appearance of the uncooked and cooked food, individually and comparatively.

For the purpose of assessment the responses of four children were focused upon.

Language Chart

	Uncooked noodles	*Cooked noodles*
Child A	*'like spagetti'*	*'thin and round'*
Child B	*'hard'*	*'soft'*
Child C	*'it's curly and straight'*	*'they come apart'*
Child D	*'they come apart'*	*'they're soft'*

The children were asked to predict the change of the noodles once they had been added to hot water. Their predictions were recorded:

Child A: *'It will stay hard'.*
Child B: *'They'll go soft - fall off'.*
Child C: *'They'll be squashy'.*
Child D: *'They'll be soft'.*

Evaluation

The children were eager to observe the noodles and describe their appearance. For example, child A was keen to talk about the noodles and used the opportunity to smell, feel and observe them. Where as child B showed some hesitance in exploring the characteristics of the noodles but offered a short description after her peers' replies.

Record sheet

In order to carry out a scientific investigation, a child may employ one or more of the following skills. L1 means Level 1 (the least competence level) as applied to the Level descriptors for National Curriculum Science.

The noodle activity - summary of level attained

SKILLS	*ABILITY LEVEL OF CHILD*		
	Towards L1	*L1*	*L2*
Hypothesising	-	-	-
Observing	*B*	*A, C, D*	-
Predicting	*A, C*	*B, D*	-
Designing and Investigation	-	-	-
Executing and Investigation	-	-	-
Concluding	*A, B*	*C, D*	-
Communicating	-	-	-

KEY

A - John
B - Stefan
C - Lucy
D - Vikki
- not achieved

From these records, individual action plan can be drawn up for each individual child and appropriate learning opportunities provided to consolidate or extend the next attainment objectives. For instance, to provide the context for further exploration of materials which change in certain circumstances: for example, dry and damp sand, uncooked and cooked eggs, or uncooked and cooked dough. Encouragement of the use of scientific language would be possible and appropriate, for children to describe different processes and stages. Another approach is to change a variable in one of the chosen processes and discuss any effect upon the end product.

Closer analysis of the noodles activity demonstrated the learning that went on in terms of the areas of experiences on offer (see the chart that follows).

The noodle activity - areas of experience

KNOWLEDGE----> WHAT? ---->	*Introduction of words to describe noodles and the change upon them; beginning of scientific terminology.*
UNDERSTANDING ----> WHAT? --->	*The permanent change of noodles when rehydrated and heated; the need to cook noodles before eating.*
ATTITUDES ----> WHAT? ----->	*Ability to verbally communicate ideas to peers/adults; ability to draw and label noodles*

SKILLS ----->	*WHAT? ------>*	*Observe noodles closely;*
	WHY? ------>	*To improve close observation skills.*
CONCEPTS ---->	*WHAT? ----->*	*Change of noodles from hard to soft when cooked.*

An insight into this small scale research shows the clarity of good early years approach to teaching and learning by the student teacher and a growing awareness of how to offer first hand, challenging and yet realistically sound experiences in scientific investigation.

A constructivist view of learning based on the model of providing a stimulus, encouraging involvement and debate and then reflecting on the range of experiences had, sits relatively comfortably with the Ollerenshaw et.al.'s model (1991). Their linear structure of the constructivist view of learning can be criticised for the apparent simplicity it shows regarding the complex nature of learning, context and the environment in which the learning occurs. It may be appropriate to analyse such a model so that effective teaching and learning stages can be planned. Orientation stage does arouse children's interest, but what type of stimulus would be most appropriate for an individual child or a group of children? Elicitation allows for clarifying what they think in this model, but whose views would be considered and more importantly, whose will not and why not? The next stage of development of this model indicates an intervention/restructuring phase where children are encouraged to test their ideas, extend and revise previous thinking in light of new experiences. This has implication for the teacher who lacks the confidence or sufficient scientific background to offer such challenges- a risky business indeed! Reviewing the learning that had occurred is a significant step and offers ample opportunity for the teacher to gain evidence of the learning/teaching process. 'Application' stage forms the final step of this model where 'theory' is put into 'practice'. This phase forms a difficult challenge for the child and the teacher, in that, how do you help and encourage children to relate what they have learned to their everyday lives?

It has been argued that the issue of quality science (investigation) is based on what we all understand to be quality early years education. The firm foundation for a child is rooted in offering first hand experience within a wide setting and from this, encouraging the child to attain higher levels of knowledge, understanding, skill and attitude. To put this empirical research into context, a brief overview of early years Science provision in UK schools is provided with hints on implications for progress and development.

In many of the UK primary/junior schools there is an awareness of the need to give science a higher curriculum priority. According to OFSTED (Office For Standards in Education) inspection findings of 79 primary schools across the nation (A review of inspection findings 1993/94 -published 1995), a number of issues emerge as to the health of science provision. Great care needs to be taken to what inferences can be drawn out of context.

1. Over-prescription limits achievement.
2. Wide variations in the quality of Science assessment, recording and reporting in primary schools.
3. Standardisation of teachers' assessments are weak.
4. Lack of detailed curriculum planning for science at the whole school level- this hampers the monitoring of the experience of individual pupils.

5 Quality of lessons:
  satisfactory = 79 %;
  good-very good = 21 %
Quality of teaching:
  satisfactory = 73 %;
  good-very good = 33 %
Quality ofassessmentand recording:
  better at KS1(5-8 year olds) than KS2(7-12 year olds)- systems in place to show link with curriculum planning, recording achievement and standardisation procedures.

Issues for consideration

a) Enhance science subject knowledge.

b) Appropriate strategies for assessing pupils' progress in scientific knowledge and skills- feedback and feedforward between assessment and planning.

c) Focused investigative work.

d) Systematic planning.

e) Non-teaching time to monitor science teaching throughout the school.

f) Danger of labelling, low expectation and low self-esteem.

g) Developing an understanding of the role of other adult(s)/support by sharing the planned learning objectives.

h) Provision for a variety of learning experiences from imaginative play to scientific exploration.

Evidence of standards achieved

'Standards of achievement- pupils work together on practical tasks with curiosity and interest; well motivated; enthusiastic participation; basic scientific vocabulary is being developed; pupils are beginning to learn how to formulate questions for investigation; make comparisons and conclusions based on evidence; poor on developing higher order skills such as those of prediction and hypothesising'.

'Quality of teaching- practical work drawing on pupils' own experiences, active involvement of pupils and promoting the skills of scientific investigation; matching appropriate tasks to ability groups; recording in a variety of ways matched to writing skills; sufficiently stretched mentally; not an overuse of worksheets or whole class instruction- leads to under-development of scientific knowledge, understanding and skills' (HMI, OFSTED, 1995).

Quality science investigation in the early years has to be planned for, delivered with imagination and in the best way that we as early years educators know to be the best practice.

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EARLY CHILDHOOD ARTS GAMES

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Introduction

The arts are central to quality early childhood programs. Drama, music, movement and dance are key components in innovative teaching and learning programs for young children. Experiences in the arts commonly attract and sustain children's involvement and provide opportunities for individualised creative responses.

Arts games are structured play experiences that are based on drama, music, dance and movement or any combination of these. Some arts games involve groups of children and an adult while others are played by an individual child and an adult. Generally the participating adult initiates, facilitates and guides the game. Arts games by nature are diverse, ranging from a simple song shared with an infant at bath time through to an energetic drama and dance experience involving a larger group of children and a number of adults. The games emphasise cooperation rather than elimination or competition and do not rely upon complex rules.

While most early childhood educators acknowledge the many benefits of the arts they express reservations regarding their own skills and abilities as teachers of drama, music, movement or dance. Arts games provide a useful starting point and structure for those teachers who lack confidence or experience in the provision of quality arts learning experiences. Additionally the simplicity and immediacy of the games appeal to both teachers and children.

This paper seeks to outline the responses of teachers and children to one arts games program. The study was undertaken in an Australian daycare setting with children aged from two to five years. The participating teachers were presented with a series of arts games which they implemented and evaluated. The feedback from the teachers' evaluations of the trialling of these games coupled with the researchers' observations provide valuable data related to arts teaching.

The research literature indicates a strong consensus supporting the view that developmentally appropriate, carefully planned, competently implemented and thoroughly evaluated arts experiences may lead to a range of beneficial results for young children. The work of Barnes (1987), Dyer and Schiller (1993), Hendrick (1994) and Larkin and Suthers (1994) amongst others, affirm and validate the importance of quality arts learning experiences within the early childhood curriculum. In programs in which the arts assume a central role a range of positive outcomes may include language development, self expression and creativity, decision making and risk taking, persistence, imagination, individuality, self concept and confidence, tolerance and cognitive, social and motor development (Isenberg and Jalongo, 1993; Schiller and Veale, 1989; Moyles, 1988). The documented benefits of well designed arts programs for young children invite additional research into the strategies available to plan, implement and evaluate such curricula in a variety of early childhood contexts.

Research design

The research project consisted of the trialling and evaluation of 20 arts games. The participating setting was a 90-place inner city day care centre in Sydney, Australia. The centre catered for children from a variety of cultural backgrounds some of whom spoke English as a second language. The participating children reflected the multicultural nature of the locality.

The centre had an early childhood trained teacher in each playroom. Two rooms - the Cloud Room (2 year olds) and the Sun Room (4 and 5 year olds) were chosen for the trialling. The teachers in these rooms had very similar backgrounds. Both had trained at the same institution, completing a 3-year undergraduate degree, and were both in their third year of teaching. While both teachers acknowledged the importance of arts experiences in early childhood curricula, they reluctantly admitted that the scope of their existing arts programs was limited. Neither teacher had expertise in the arts and one was quite anxious about singing with the children.

After careful observation of the teachers and children the researchers selected twenty arts games for trialling in this study. Ten games were suitable for two year olds and ten for four- and five-year olds. Some games were traditional while others were original games devised by the researchers. The games used were:

GAMES FOR 2 year olds	GAMES FOR 4 and 5 year olds
Follow the sound	Action rip
Jack be nimble	Imitate the fall
Musical hoops	Lap ball
Over the stones	Little grey ponies
Pass the ball	Musical hoops
Roll the ball	Obwisana
Under and over	People skittles
Wake up you sleepyheads	Sound moves
What does the cow say?	Three ropes in a circle
Who's under the blanket?	When I was one

The games represented a variety of drama, music, dance and movement experiences (Larkin and Suthers, 1995). The teachers were given a detailed description of each game which contained a procedure for playing the game, any equipment required and the recommended group size. Possible variants to extend or modify each game were also included. However the actual implementation of each game was determined by the teacher and programmed as she felt was appropriate for her group of children. The only requirement was that each game be played at least three times over the six weeks of the study.

Each time a game was played the teacher completed a comprehensive evaluation. This evaluation took the form of guided reflection on the game itself, the children's responses to the experience and the teacher's own role and reactions. Additional data was gathered by the researchers on their visits to the centre to observe and video the teachers and children playing arts games.

Results & discussion

The results of the study relate to three principal aspects of the investigation - the games themselves, the children's responses and the teachers' responses.

The games

The teachers in the study happily used all 20 games in their program, stating that they would definitely continue to use seven of them in the future and another six in a modified version or as transitions. The researchers observed that the participating teachers had little trouble interpreting the written description of the game into classroom practice.

The flexibility of the arts games was commended by the teachers who used the games in a variety of environments. As well as being played indoors in the playrooms many of these games were played outdoors as Sydney's climate is mild and warm throughout the year.

In their evaluations the teachers described over 75 % of the games as "developmentally appropriate" for their groups. They recognised the potential of the arts games to enhance children's physical, cognitive and social development. Specifically they reported that the games facilitated physical skills such as jumping, running, balancing and ball skills; cognitive skills including aural skills, problem solving, memory; and social skills related to participating in groups, turn taking and sharing. Additionally creativity, imagination and individualised response were encouraged by many of the arts games.

For example in *Sound moves* three or four sound sources or instruments are chosen. Each is given a corresponding action. The children are invited to move around the environment according to which sound is being played. Changing sounds are reflected in the children's changing actions. Before the game commences the children are encouraged to participate in choosing any sound producing object and also in creating actions to match the selected sounds. They are free to choose a number of objects and experiment with a variety of potential sounds before they make their final choice. Similarly they are encouraged to devise actions that match the sounds by contributing their ideas and discussing options with their peers. Other variants of the game that encourage higher levels of auditory discrimination involved having the children playing the sound makers concealed from view. The other children moving in response to the sounds were reliant upon auditory cues only. Similarly an additional challenge was provided when all the chosen sound makers were of very similar tone colour. The teacher reported that this game offered children a range of opportunities to engage in problem solving, peer interaction, group negotiation, creative movement, music making and auditory discrimination while allowing for individual responses.

Children's responses

Both teachers indicated that the arts games provided meaningful learning experiences for the children in their groups. They consistently reported a significant degree of positive response and high levels of engagement from the children. One teacher wrote that" the majority of the children love games especially those which involve an element of role play [such as *Jack be nimble] or those which create suspense [like People skittles* and *Under and over*]."

The children displayed a strong preference for particular games which they indicated by frequently requesting their favourites. On many occasions the children in the older group asked for *Lap ball* while the 2-year olds favoured *Follow the sound.* In addition the teachers commented upon the opportunities for individual child response that the arts games afforded. As anticipated the younger children invariably responded to the stimulus of the game on an individual basis whereas the older children frequently engaged in small group play. This small group play often involved two, three or four children such as in cooperative group dancing.

The children themselves evolved variants of some arts games that they played frequently. *What does the cow say?* was originally based on farm animal sounds. The teacher's recent purchase of Australian hand puppets inspired the two-year olds to include these in the game. The rhyme became "What does the kookaburra say?" Versions featuring emus, wombats, cockatoos and kangaroos also evolved.

Teachers responses

The teachers found that arts games supplemented their arts program in an enjoyable and positive way. They recorded that little adult motivation was required for the children to participate in the arts games. Frequently the sight of hoops, sticks or balls sufficiently stimulated interest.

In playing arts games the most reported strategies used by the teachers were accurate verbal feedback and positive reinforcement. Both used praise and encouragement to challenge and extend the children. The teacher of the older group also used questioning to guide the children to find solutions to problems. The 2's teacher reported that her active and enthusiastic participation in the arts games provided a model for the children, motivated them and maximised the learning outcomes for them.

Neither teacher had a specialisation in the arts in their background or training. In self reflection one said that "generally in drama, movement and music I don't feel really confident." The other expressed a desire to increase the scope of the arts experiences she offered her group; "I tend to stick to the same old things" she noted. With one exception all the arts games were completely unfamiliar to the teachers at the start of the study. As anticipated with such a diverse range of arts experiences the teachers felt more confident with some of the games than others. Games which involved singing a song were the most threatening for both teachers. They were anxious about learning the song accurately from the written version and then presenting it to the children. As neither of the teachers read music fluently they relied on other staff members to sing the song for them. Both suggested that an audio tape of the songs would be helpful.

In implementing the games the teachers were quick to capitalise on opportunities that could enhance children's physical, social and cognitive development . However they were much less adept in extending the children's creativity and artistry. This probably reflects their training in which social/emotional, physical and cognitive development were covered in far greater detail than child creativity. This emphasis in training understandably influences teachers' practice and confidence.

Conclusions

The study showed that arts games can readily become part of early childhood programs that cater for children aged from two to five years. The benefits for the children of playing arts games included practising and developing physical skills such as coordination, jumping and ball handling; cognitive skills such as language development, problem solving; and social skills like cooperation, sharing and group negotiation. Additionally the study's findings suggested that arts games contributed to the children's developing sense of personal creativity and artistry. Importantly, the researchers concluded that the children found the games to be challenging, stimulating and highly enjoyable.

While the teachers were competent and committed practitioners they themselves felt that they lacked skills and confidence in drama, music, dance and movement. Their lack of confidence had previously limited the range and type of arts experience they were prepared to attempt. The idea of presenting arts experiences to the children as games was appealing to them for a number of reasons. Firstly they felt assured that their groups, like most children, would be enthusiastic about playing new games. Secondly the games while providing many opportunities for individual response seemed less daunting and "more manageable" than entirely open-ended arts experiences. Thirdly, although the teachers did not initially feel confident with some of the games, the children's obvious enjoyment made the activity a success which in turn encouraged them to attempt other games. As the teachers' confidence grew they felt able to modify some games or try variations suggested by the children. The researchers also observed over the time of the study the increasing assurance of the teachers as they implemented the arts games.

One issue that is an ongoing concern for all educators who work in music, drama, dance and movement is the difficulty of transmission of the games from those who know them to other early childhood workers. The teachers in this study found that although the descriptions of arts games were clearly written the songs and the flavour of some were not easily communicated. The researchers believed that this was not critical to the successful implementation of the games as most are quite versatile and all have suggested variants. They had intended that the games be a stimulus and starting point for arts experiences rather than a recipe to be followed. One of the teachers suggested it would be interesting to learn the games by observing a group of children playing them. While this is not always possible it highlights the importance of educators sharing ideas with other staff members and with colleagues from other centres through professional associations, conferences and workshops. The researchers believe that for new practitioners and student teachers who are beginning to plan and implement arts experiences arts games workshops are an opportunity to learn some games, an incentive to try the activities with children and a possible boost to confidence. More experienced staff members, keen to expand their repertoire of teaching ideas, may also find arts games workshops valuable. As discussed above the teachers in this study did not read music and had to ask others to sing the songs for them and then remember them. The suggestion of an audio tape of the songs as an aide memoir, but not for use with the children, may be useful.

Arts games can be easily incorporated into quality early childhood programs. They provide an accessible starting point for beginning practitioners or those new to providing arts experiences for their children; and they are a valuable supplement to existing programs. Arts games offer teachers accessible and versatile experiences that can provide opportunities for children to express themselves through drama, music, dance and movement. Further they can be used to facilitate children's developing creativity and to enhance social, physical and cognitive development.

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LET'S ADD R.I.C.E. (RELEVANT, INTERCULTURAL, CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES) TO OUR CURRICULUM MENU!

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Curriculum in Early Childhood Education

The field of early childhood education attracts people who combine a respect for individuality and the uniqueness of human growth in the first period of development. Understanding that children originate with an egocentric awareness, planned activities for them should therefore center around relevant experiences during early years. These projects are often combined with topical themes that provide a basis for curriculum development.

Teachers understand that children begin with a self centered focus and through experiences, nurturing, and a thoughtfully and carefully prepared environment, the stage is set for optimal learning. As early as the 1920's, Lucy S. Mitchell referred to this approach to planning for learning as an "expanding curriculum" (Mitchell, 1928). It starts with the knowledge that a child has about him or herself, then his/her family and community and eventually, about his/her knowledge of global connections.

Literature and Cultures in Early Childhood Education

One of the important vehicles for providing early childhood curricula activities is through the use of literature (Rochman, 1995; Willett, 1995). Quality books include themes that are important to the child - issues such as trust, acceptance and self esteem (Salvadore, 1995).

A significant benefit of introducing children to a wide range of literature is that they can see their lifestyles validated and at the same time gain a broader vision and acceptance of individual likenesses and differences (Hsu, 1995). Early childhood educators recognize and support the impact that activities and related literature can have on the positive identity and attitude towards others that are developed in these years (Fereshteh, 1995; Winter, 1994).

A great deal of the literature published before the mid-eighties seemed to have minorities included as an after thought and in ways that did not provide accurate indications of a specific race, culture or gender. They were often viewed as the "bad guys", threatening figures, or sources of ridicule. Books representing diverse groups often included stereotypic behaviors. Sexist role typing was common.

Few reference texts and research articles on multicultural literature were available for adults. As early as 1965, Nancy Larrick wrote a journal article entitled *The All White World of Children's Books.* Larrick surveyed 63 mainstream publishers who had published a combined total of 5,200 children's books between 1962-1964. African-American characters appeared in only 6.7 % of those books either in text or illustrations. Larrick's article, which coincided with the civil rights movement in the United States and the rise of African-American activism, underscored the need for quality literature that included minorities.

Fondue to Tossed Salad

During the great immigration of the early 1900's, the identity fostered in the United States was that of a melting pot (Jameyson, 1995; Lee, 1995). The "melting pot" was a phrase used to symbolize assimilation of all the cultures present in the United States. In order to obtain success and prestige, conformity to a single cultural model was required. Heritage was not a source of pride - it was considered a part of the past (Miller-Lachman, 1992). Today, the analogy is that the richness and substance resulting from a mixture of people more closely represents a tossed salad or a quilt.

In the United States and other countries experiencing large influxes of immigrants, how to acknowledge and address the increased diversity has been a challenge in perception and planning (Cornwell & Stoddard, 1994). Early childhood educators have found guidance in the book **The Anti-Bias Curriculum** by Louise Derman-Sparks and the A.B.C. Task Force (1989). Attitudes about people and differences result from a child's first experiences at home and at school. If a children are treated with high regard and have a positive self image, then, as the "curriculum" of ideas is presented to them, they should grow into adults who value and respect others.

Expanded Multicultural Lens and Literature

With the understanding that there are many cultures and much to learn, questions arise about how to foster pride in one's heritage and at the same time enhance appreciation and respect for others (Bruchac, 1995). A book is selected not because it is "multicultural" but because it is book that is relevant to the experiences and developmental issues present in the early childhood years (Aronson, 1995).

The depth of this issue suggests that an expanded set of multicultural definitions could be applied to the use of literature and could contribute to effective planning. **Multicultural** literature would refer to a mix of cultures within one country. Literature that is **culturally diverse** would include what is unique to an individual culture, yet universal to all. **Cross-cultural** literature would describe that there is an international exchange from one country to another.

Table 1. Application to Curriculum Planning.

Title	Multicultural Lit	Culturally Diverse Lit	Cross Cultural Lit
Amazing Grace		Positive self-esteem	
Everybody Cooks Rice	Preparation of ethnic rice dishes	Food preparation and eating of a rice dish	Rice Sampling from different cultures/ acceptance
How My Parents Learned to Eat	Manners and use of eating utensils	Eating habits and manners/self-esteem/acceptance	Mastery of other cultures' eating utensils
Mama, Do You Love Me?		Love, trust & approval from mother	Inuit context
You be Me, I'll Be You		Selfesteem & acceptance	
I Speak English for My Mother	Translation of a language	Love of mother/ childcompetence	

The chart crosses these expanded definitions and identifies the developmental issue in the story. Applying the childhood themes of trust, acceptance, self esteem and other relevant early childhood content areas, this chart shows how books can be used with increasing complexity in classroom curricula. With both life experience and exposure to appropriate materials, the children's understanding of the world around them becomes more intricate and abstract.

For example, in the book entitled **Everyone Cooks Rice** by Nora Dooley, many cultures are represented eating rice dishes particular to their heritage. Within the framework of this book, the theme of food preparation embraces all three categories cited in the chart. Another piece of children's literature where food is the focus is in, **How My Parents Learned to Eat** by Ina Friedman. Manners and the manipulation of utensils are important developmental tasks during a child's early years. The story follows an American man and a Japanese woman learning how to use a fork, a knife, a spoon and chopsticks. The result is that their daughter is able to successfully adapt to the eating customs of her Japanese and U.S. heritage.

Positive interaction with a parent is seen in Joose's **Mama Do You Love Me?** Children of all ages ask for reassurance of a mother's love, trust and approval. Although the costumes and objects illustrated in the pages are indigenous to the Inuit culture, the message is universal.

Another parenting theme is the need for children to be independent. In the book, **I Speak English For My Mom,** Lupe Gomez must translate from English to Spanish for her mother. Lupe is supportive, but she sometimes admits that she would like to play or go to school instead of interpreting for her mother.

Children of all ages can identify with the desire to change themselves and be somebody different. In the book, **You Be Me and I'll Be You**, a father and child conspire to alter their appearances. After a series of incidents which end with the disapproval of their antics from mother, they decide that being themselves is best.

Being yourself is also featured in **Amazing Grace** by Mary Hoffman. Grace, an African-American child has a vivid imagination. She acts out fantasies where she is always the heroine. When she has an opportunity to try out for the role of Peter Pan, she wins the part in spite of the fact that she had initially been told by her classmates that Peter Pan was a white boy.

Avenues of support for Practitioners

Attitude formation and change requires willingness, openness and support (Ramsey, 1982). When individuals consider the impact of their actions, reflective practice results (Schon, 1983). Members of the early care and education community have many sources from which to draw inspiration for this type of professional development.

Conferences provide opportunities for practitioners and researchers in the global early care and education community to share interests and concerns. Association involvement at all levels are wellsprings of information, collegiality and leadership opportunities.

The availability of technology provides a world wide communication network. There are on-line discussion groups that address early childhood issues in policy, curriculum, children's literature and a host of other topics. Electronic transfer of information facilitates action research and enables groups from all over the world to work together.

By modeling respect of others and adapting intercultural activities within the curriculum, early childhood educators can provide a long lasting contribution to peace and tolerance for all.

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SELF-PORTRAIT OF A CHILD: PORTFOLIOS AS A MEANS OF SELF-ASSESSMENT IN PRESCHOOL AND PRIMARY SCHOOL

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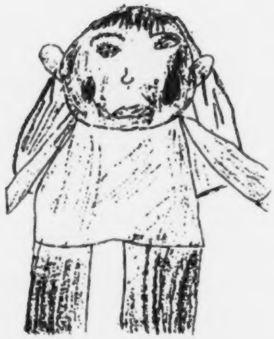


What is the meaning of this folder?

Err ... album of growth. There are all kinds of papers... a portrait of myself. It says Portrait of Taija as a preschooler. This is my portrait. We looked in the mirror. I was looking at myself in the mirror. I had then ear rings like these... I lost the other one... then I had this dress ... there is something written, I couldn't do it well...

Taija is one of the first-graders in Nissniku primary school in Kirkkonummi, Finland, who, together with their teachers in the kindergarten, started to document and assess their growth and learning during their kindergarten years by means of the portfolios. When going to the primary school the children took their portfolios with them and the process of documenting and assessing was continued there. The portfolios were seen as a bridge from kindergarten to school.

This case-study into assessment from the child's perspective is part of a research project on flexible school-beginning. Bridging kindergarten and school with portfolios was one way of bringing flexibility and continuity to the years from five to eight. Other forms of co-operation between kindergarten and school are examined by action research in different local development projects. Co-operation in different learning environments is seen through ecological approach (Bronfenbrenner 1979). In this ecological model different settings are related one with the other within the wider environment. The starting point in this study is in how young children experience their learning environment and how they take part in building their different environments.

In this article I focus on the following questions with reference to one kindergarten's and school's approach to self-assessment: What are the portfolios and why Taija, her peers, teachers and parents are so enthusiastic about them? How do children's portfolios reflect their individual growth, development and learning? What is their influence on the children's self-knowledge? Do the portfolio activities enhance the holistic learning environment?

What is a portfolio?

> *"If your ultimate aim in education is to develop independent learners, there are few better ways than the use of portfolios." (Clemmons et al. 1993, 62)*

Documentation and assessment are important elements in securing continuity, progress and flexibility in the teaching and learning of young children. The overall process of documenting and assessing provides a basis for the planning of the following stages in the child's learning. This process should involve all significant people in the child's learning environment: the child, teacher, parents and peers.

Through self-assessment the child's awareness of his or her learning and growth develops. This awareness and involvement in learning and assessment in turn benefits the child's learning (Kohonen 1992). Self-assessment is emphasized in the *portfolio assessment* which is a promising approach for securing quality and authenticity in assessment.

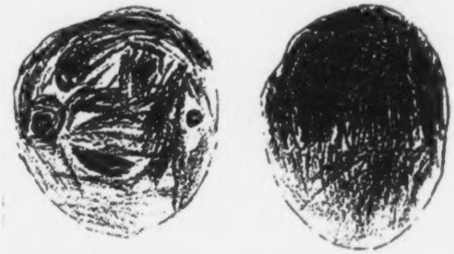
The portfolio can be defined as a purposeful documentation and selection of a child's work. It offers opportunities to exhibit the child's performance and growth over time. The selection should include the child's own description of the learning context, his or her personal goals and criteria. The portfolio should also contain the child's own reflection and assessment of the selected work and the process of learning and development. (Paulson et al. 1991, 60; Tierney et al. 1991, 41-43; Linnakylä 1994, 10.)

Portfolio assessment offers various opportunities for both the child and the teacher (De Fina 1992, Linnakylä 1994):

- to develop a sense of process in work and learning
- to create means for the child's self-assessment and self-evaluation

- to help children and teachers to determine and set individual goals
- to individualize teaching and learning
- to place assessment in an authentic learning environment
- to develop a sense of ownership in a child's work and learning
- to communicate and develop the curriculum

However, there is no single right way to do portfolios; every folder is individual and different and hopefully represents its owner. Also the functions and meaning of the folder vary from one child, group and teacher to the other. There is no set format either for the concrete portfolio where to store the information. It is, indeed, a matter of personal choice and there can be variation for example from a folder to a video or a tape or even a box full of important and valuable things. The format of the children's portfolios in my case-study was A4 folders. To make the folder individual and to emphasize ownership, every child made the cover to look his or her very own.



This 7-year-old boy wanted to present his portrait. On the front cover was his face and on the back cover the back of his head. And inside the portfolio, I hope, was his whole school world.

The albums of growth

In this case-study the portfolios are called *'the albums of growth'*. They are a composite of information collected to reflect *positively* the children's achievements. The album of growth can be described as a portrait of the child, his or her skills, abilities and interests. It reflects the child's individual growth, development and learning. Through it the child from a very early age is involved in self-assessment as part of co-operational learning.

The most essential task of portfolios in the early years in this study is to promote *the child's self-knowledge*. The contents of the portfolios reflect children's everyday life and the learning and growth processes. Their portfolios grow together with their personal development and progress from kindergarten to school.

What should then go into the portfolio? After the first term of the experimentation with the portfolios we looked through the children's folders to find it out. Here are some examples from the folders:

- personal data (e.g. the child's own page)
- samples of the child's work:
  - drawings, paintings (how the child's pictorial expression develops at the age of 1-6)
  - children's own texts: tales, stories, chats, plays
- details of different events, celebrations and excursions in kindergarten as experienced by the child
- information about the things the child enjoys (for example a pleasing song, a rhyme, a book)
- information about the child's daily life in kindergarten: what he or she does, plays, learns, what he or she is interested in
- photos of different activities
- children's narrative comments and assessments of their work
- self-assessments and self-reflections (summaries of the activities)

We also looked for the different functions of these albums of growth. The table gives examples of the different functions from four different points of view: the child, the kindergarten: teacher and peers, parents and the future school.

Table 1. Functions of the albums of growth in the kindergarten.

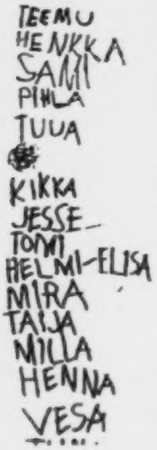
Child	Kindergarten	Parents	School
Self-knowledge This is how I grow, develop and learn - physical growth - social growth - cognitive learning - speech development - pictorial expression - beginning literacy - narration - self-concept - courage *Self-assessment*	*Interaction among children* *Teaching* - to follow child's development - a closer view on children - planning - communication with home, other groups, etc.	*Parental participation* What is my child doing in kindergarten? How is my child developing? What is the child interested in? How could I support my child?	*Student knowledge* - abilities - interests - what does he or she think of learning and school *How should I continue with the child?*

Naturally, these functions will vary and change over time and in different learning environments. If, for example, I wrote this table again after the first year of the experimentation in the school, there might be differences due to changes e.g. in emphasis in curriculum.

Self-knowledge - this is how I grow and develop

Through the album of growth it is possible to give a many-sided portrait of the child and exhibit different areas of the child's development and learning. Some examples of these areas are physical and social growth, beginning literacy and cognitive learning (see Table 1, first column).

6-year-old Teemu wanted to document his own literacy project in his portfolio. As his project he wanted to collect the names of all the children in the kindergarten (at that time over 70 children). He began by writing the names of his own group. That was quite easy. But then to get the other names he needed other children's help and co-operation. He wandered around the whole kindergarten asking the names - at the same time he was able to get to know children in the kindergarten. What a large amount of social interaction!



TEEMU
HENKKA
SAMI
PIHLA
JUUA
KIKKA
JESSE
TOMI
HELMI-ELISA
MIRA
TAIJA
MILLA
HENNA
VESA

A selection of work from different areas is not, of course, enough to make a folder a portfolio. It should always include the child's descriptions and reflections on the work samples, summaries of the activities and self-assessments. Children's self-reflections on growing and learning are also an important part of building their self-knowledge. Last spring children made summaries of the previous autumn together with their teachers. Here are Jesse's (a 6-year-old-boy) choices for the most important events in the autumn and his descriptions of them and his learning:

What did you learn last autumn?

(photo of Jesse skating) I learned how to skate, 'cause last winter I used to trip and stumble on the ice. It has become a bit better, 'cause it is such fun ... it's really great. Except sometimes when you don't feel like going.

What would you like to learn?

I would also like to learn to read 'cause that might be fun. 'Cause I always have to watch programs with text ... so mom and dad needn't always read the text. It really makes me sad 'cause I can't even read.

What was the most exciting thing?

(drawing of a snow castle) We were building a snow castle Tomi and I. That was good when we had to carry that big snowball just the two of us. We couldn't carry it. Then I tried it alone and then it just moved and I got it over. Almost everyone wanted to come inside. I drove them away. We made a gate. We played and stayed there. Tomi made a snow chair. Once I jumped over the wall head first. It was the best!

What would you do otherwise?

(Sami's report of the football match) I would have done differently in the football match. You see, it felt so strange to hover about with that ball and all the time they were winning. I would do that differently!

Children making their choices

Most children in the kindergarten assess themselves and describe their work orally, some children also in writing. Although the portfolio is regarded as the child's property, teachers have an extremely important role in the assessment process. They are listeners and they encourage the children to reflect by asking questions like the following ones:

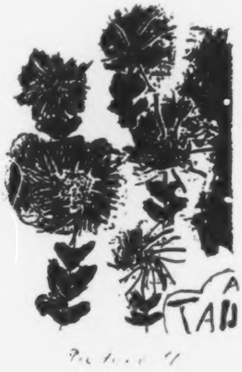
What does the folder tell about you as a learner?
What have you learned?
How have you changed?
What is the most important piece of work for you?
Why? How did you do it? What does it tell you? What happened then?
Which one do you like best?
Why? etc.
What is the funniest / nicest piece of work?
What would you like to improve?
What would you like to do next?

The younger the child, the more central the teacher's role is. However, from a very early age children are interested in their folders and enjoy going through them with their teachers over and over again.

In the kindergarten children themselves made their choices for the portfolio and teachers asked them to explain the selection of work. The reasons for the children's choices were recorded either on the work, on a separate paper or form. After learning to write children will write the reasons themselves.

Children selected work in different ways and also the reasons for selection varied. Sometimes their selections and reasons can greatly surprise an adult. The reasons can be related to the outcome, appearance or process of work, or the meaning of the events linked with a specific piece of work.

In one of her first choices, Taija emphasized her satisfaction with the outcome:



Which one of these came out best?

T: (humming and looking through her folder) *this one I haven't done myself this one!*

Why do you think it came out right?

It is so beautiful.

What makes it beautiful?

'Cause these are dandelions.

How did you do it?

These have been painted with water-colours and these with ink. First black and then water-colors. I know how dandelions look like. We had seen them.

The highlight of the previous autumn for 6-year-old Sami was when he prepared a report of a football match. The match between Finland and Sweden was organized in the kindergarten. Sami chose making the report the most exciting event of the previous autumn:

> *The first goal came when Jesse didn't notice the ball and it went into the goal and then it was 1-0 for Sweden. In 2-0 situation Milla didn't notice the ball when it was kicked into the goal for Sweden. We were in high spirits after the match. The Finnish team didn't have a good feeling. But two players of the Finnish team got medals. Sami and Teemu had been in a good pressure. They didn't let any goals for Finland.*

Sami described his choice as follows:

> *This football report 'cause I could report on goals and all that. When Jesse didn't notice when one of us shot 1-0 for Sweden and Milla didn't see that Sweden shot 2-0. That goal situation was exciting.*

Sami also chose this report to exhibit what he had learned in the autumn.

> *It was good when I learned to do that report, that football report. Otherwise I wouldn't have such a fine picture in my folder. (Sami is showing the picture he had made of the football match). That was neat.*

In the above situations Sami's report and assessments were written by his teacher. However, in his summary of the previous autumn he hoped to learn to write:

> *I would like to learn how to write. 'Cause it always turns out badly or so.*

Interaction among children

Portfolios can also be important when children introduce themselves to other children, teachers and parents. Thus they are able to give a comprehensive picture of themselves to people surrounding them. When I visited the preschool and the primary school the children always wanted to show their work samples to me. They were extremely proud of their albums of growth.

To follow the child's development

What is the meaning of the albums of growth for teachers? Through them they can follow children's growth and development. Teachers learn to know individual children better in their groups. Children's portfolios can also be vehicles for future planning. Furthermore, they have been used in situations where there is a need to pass on information from the kindergarten to homes or from one kindergarten group to another.

Parental participation

An important element in the portfolio process is the parents' involvement in assessment. And not just in receiving or sharing information about their children, but also in contributing to the recording of their achievements. In that way the ownership of portfolios is partly extended to parents and the portfolio process is seen as a dialogue between parents, teachers and children.

In this case-study parents were interested in using the portfolios. Through them they acquired more information about their children's life, interests, activities and curriculum in the kindergarten and school. The parents took actively part in the development and assessment of the portfolios as well. The portfolios were shared with the child, parents and teacher in discussions in order to have a common basis for future learning activities.

During the summer before their children went to school, parents helped their children to select pieces of work from the kindergarten for the portfolios to be taken to school the following autumn.

From pre-school to school

In the co-operation between the preschool and the primary school portfolios created continuity in the learning and teaching. During their last spring in the kindergarten children had opportunities to get to know their future school and teacher. They visited the school with their kindergarten teacher and introduced themselves to their new teacher through portfolios.

On the important first school day the school-beginners were extremely proud of having their albums of growth in their backbags. Working with portfolios was also continued in school. In the primary school there are six groups, and all the teachers in this school wanted to experiment with portfolio assessment. Another new thing in this school was that they had just changed their old grouping into non-graded groups. This meant that in every group there were children from grades one to three. This was particularly important for the school-beginners coming from Kpas kindergarten - portfolio assessment was something totally new for the other students and teachers in the school.

What were the children's first choices for their schoolportfolios? In her first choice Taija wanted to show her enthusiasm for the beginning of the school. She had written and drawn different school words. And what about the reasons - simply because she was satisfied with the appearance of the backbag and the chair. In the kindergarten Sami was already very interested in numbers and counting. So, it wasn't surprising that his first choice in the school was a page from a mathematics book. He gave the following reasons for his choice: "It is so good, because it was from mathematics. Mathematics is nice."

Conclusions

In this article I have mainly described the experiences from the first year of the experimentation with portfolios in the kindergarten as a means of self-assessment in the early years. Portfolios were a child-centered method of documentation and assessment bringing out the children's ideas and opinions. Activities in the kindergarten and school were documented and assessed by the children through portfolios. Portfolios were primarily regarded as the children's property. The focus on the children's ideas seemed to strengthen their self-esteem and offer opportunities to develop self-knowledge. It helped children make and show their own choices and to reflect on their development and learning.

Although the focus is on the children's self-assessment and reflective thinking, according to the ecological approach, all those involved in the children's learning should also be involved in the assessment. The ownership was thus extended to significant others in the child's environments. Teachers learned new ways to follow and assess children's development. Portfolios gave also insights to future planning. Furthermore, portfolios increased parents' active participation. Parents were seen as important contributors to the assessment process of their children.

One of our central goals was to create a bridge from the kindergarten to school through portfolios. Children passed themselves information of their development and learning to the next stage of learning. Portfolios were warmly welcomed in the school and they continued to grow and develop there together with the children. In that way it was possible to enhance flexibility and continuity in the children's lives in their different learning environments.

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CONDITIONS FOR APPROPRIATE PEDAGOGICAL ORGANIZING AND PERFORMING OF PLAY IN THE PRESCHOOL INSTITUTIONS IN MACEDONIA

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Introduction

The theme of this research is play and its pedagogical organizing and performing in the preschool institutions. The research comprised 28 educational groups (medium and large) and 70 preschool teachers from several preschool institutions in Skopje and its neighbourhood. The results obtained from the research proved the hypothesis that in Skopje and its neighbourhood there is an absence of optimal conditions for appropriate organizing and performing of children's play. This particularly refers to the spatial requirements, toys, means and didactic material as a condition for appropriate pedagogical organizing and performing of play and play activities.

Play is an activity of basic importance for the development of children of preschool age. Much has been written about play, many researches have been conducted but we haven't been able to define the phenomenon of children's play yet.

In the preschool period play occupies all the personality of the children and presents an inexhaustible source of new knowledge. Play is a space created by the child offering him thorough realization. Play offers a possibility where the child can surpass himself and cross the borders of his own experience.

In the modern environments of life play becomes even more important. Fast and dynamic life is one of the reasons why employed parents dedicate less time to their children. Usual human communication is being reduced to one-track communication, mainly through the mass media. In such conditions play loses its basic features. "It becomes programmed, the green monitor supersedes the green fields, cartoon heroes, friends, even parents have been replaced by hourly paid people. (Zbornik, 1991) " No one considers play as important and as the most accessible source of the culture, through which a link to living and passed generations is established."

In circumstances when the parental home is too small for play, children's play grounds poorly equipped and maintained, it seems that the preschool institution remains the only place for appropriate organizing and performing of play and play activities. But what really are the existing conditions there?

The necessity for this research came from the situation in the preschool institutions today. The research was diagnostical and revealed the modes the whole education work was conducted in the preschool institutions.

Aim and tasks of the study

The theme of this research was play and play activities of preschool children and conditions for their appropriate, pedagogical organizing and performing in the education process in the preschool institutions. The primary aim of this research was to examine play and conditions for its appropriate pedagogical organizing and performing in preschool institutions.

According to the aim defined, the tasks of the research were the following:

1. To examine the treatment of play and play activities of the preschool child in the actual educational programme;
2. To study the norms and standards of play organizing and performing in the preschool institutions;
3. To examine the attitudes and opinions of preschool teachers regarding children's play and conditions for its appropriate organizing and performing in the pre-school institutions;
4. To define objective conditions for performing children's play directly through the educational process.

Fulfilling of these tasks should lead us to information revealing other links, interrelations and relationships among the categories examined.

General Hypothesis

There is an absence of optimal conditions for the appropriate organizing and performing of children's play in the preschool institutions.

Accessory Hypothesis

1. The preschool educational programme gives a dominant importance to play and its role in the development and education of the preschool child;
2. Pedagogical standards and norms are compliant with development needs of the preschool child as well as with minimal requirements of the appropriate organizing and performing of children's play;
3. Majority of the preschool teachers have a positive attitude towards the role of play in the development of the preschool child;
4. Preschool teachers assess conditions for play in their preschool institution as unsatisfactory;
5. Material conditions (space and equipment), toys, means and didactic materials are unsatisfactory for the appropriate organizing and performing of children's play in the preschool institutions;
6. The organization of preschool play in the preschool institutions is in discrepancy with the contemporary needs and interests of the preschool child.

Design of the study

Various samples were necessary for this research (a sample of preschool institutions, a sample of educational groups and a sample of preschool teachers).

The sample of preschool institutions N= (28) was randomly stratified which means that four preschool institutions were randomly chosen from groups with different development level.

Samples chosen comply with the aims, tasks, hypothesis and character of this research. The sample structure shows that all relevant categories of the population of preschool teachers were included.

The research sample equals to 19.3 % N= (70) of the total population of the pre-school teachers in the preschool institutions in Skopje and its neighbourhood.

This research had, from a methodological point of view, a descriptive character. Having in mind the theme and the aim of the research, and in order to obtain relevant data, following research techniques were applied in this research:

1. Analysis of the pedagogical documentation,
2. Questionnaires,

3. Scaling and
4. Systematic monitoring

Instruments:

1. Memo pad for contents analysis of the educational activities programme in preschool education,
2. Record for written evidence of activities (free activities and directed activities record) and
3. Questionnaire - scale for the preschool teachers.

The results

I

A general conclusion from the analysis of the educational programme in preschool education is that play and play activities are given the appropriate treatment, role and meaning regarding development and education of preschool children. It is obvious in emphasizing the role of play in the intellectual, moral, aesthetic and physical development of the preschool child.

As we know, play is important for cognitive abilities of children. The child enriches its own speech through play and in a specific way becomes familiar with the immediate social and natural environment. The child also develops its moral features - persistence, independence, initiative. (Nporpama, 1982). Play has its role in aesthetic education. In the process of play the child strengthens its body and health and improves its motoriy abilities.

Analysis of the types of play and play activities included in the programme (creative, constructive, motory, didactic) and the large number of aims and tasks to be met, once more confirms the development possibilities of these activities which are of great importance in the correct development and education of the children in the preschool age. All this absolutely confirms the hypothesis for the dominant importance given to play and play activities in the actual programme and its role in the development and education of children in the preschool institutions.

II

The analysis of norms and standards for space and equipment, toys, means, and educational materials in the educational work with children of preschool age showed the important role given to the psycho-physical development of children besides fulfilling the programme's aims and tasks. However, it is a disturbing fact that these are minimal norms and standards, i. e. the low level of equipment in the preschool institutions, which level has not been respected for a long time now. The actual minimal norms and standards offer a satisfactory level in carrying out the educational work in the preschool institutions. Another question is what, in fact, minimal norm means from the aspect of quantity. This definition of minimal norms and standards is questionable by itself (Hopmatnbn, 1987) We should endeavour to establish normal, optimal norms and standards, regardless of the social circumstances and actual situation of education. This actual structure is wrong, it blunts the criteria and leaves negative consequences to the youngest generation.

III

The data obtained from the systematic monitoring of free and directed activities confirmed our hypothesis of unsatisfactory material conditions (space and equipment), toys, means and didactic materials for appropriate organizing and performing children's play in the preschool institutions. It particularly becomes obvious from the records of free activities regarding the quantity of toys used where only in 25 % of cases there is a toy for each child. The data for equipment of play-comers in the room for daily activities also prove the hypothesis. The results obtained from the systematic monitoring of the free and directed activities thoroughly confirmed the hypothesis that the organization of play and play activities in the preschool institutions is in discrepancy with the contemporary needs and interests of the preschool child. The organization, forms, methods and especially means used in free and directed activities thoroughly confirmed it. It should be pointed out that extremely favourable results were obtained regarding the preschool teachers, their communication with the children, support of children's initiative, maintenance of discipline in the group and treatment of children.

This proves that the appropriate organizing and performing of play according to the modern needs and interests of the preschool child depends besides on the preschool teacher, also on material conditions. Regardless of the teacher's strong enthusiasm and will for modern work according to widely accepted standards, the preschool teacher is thwarted at the very beginning. All this shows that unless the actual conditions of work in the preschool institutions change soon in the sense of their improvement according to the modern needs of the child, the situation of the existing gap masked with the teacher's enthusiasm will be worsened at the expence of the children's development and creativity.

IV

The results from the conducted poll of the teachers confirmed the hypothesis of teachers' opinions and attitudes regarding play and play activities. The hypothesis that the majority of the pre-school teachers have a positive attitude towards importance of play of the preschool child was completely confirmed. This is obvious by the fact that 94.28 % of the preschool teachers see play as important in the development of all components of the personality of the child, i. e. play has the chief importance in the complete development of the pre-school child.

Similarly, 68.57 % of the preschool teachers believe that play has the greatest importance in the development and education of the preschool child, 66.72 % stated that through play they regularly achieved better results and 75.71 % used play in all educational segments equally.

The results from the poll confirmed the hypothesis that "pre-school teachers assess the playing conditions in their preschool institution as unsatisfactory." The most frequent were the answers where teachers stated the lack of toys, means and didactic material, spatial conditions and number of children in the group as reasons for the absence of play in the preschool institution.

Only 17.14 % of all preschool teachers state that quantity of toys, means and didactic materials is excellent and 28.57 % see it as good. Professional and organizational conditions for organizing and performing of play were assessed as excellent by 37.15 % of the teachers. It is interesting that the hypothesis regarding spatial conditions for organizing and performing of play was not completely confirmed since 62.86 % see spatial requirements of the room for daily activities completely met and 54.29 % use the yard of the preschool institution. These data are contradictory. Namely, 44.28 % of the preschool teachers see the spatial conditions as one of the main reasons for the unsatisfactory application of play in the educational process, 32.86 % see the number of children in the group as one of the main reasons for the unsatisfactory application of play in the educational process. Likewise, numerous are the teachers who insist on reduction of the number of children in the group in favour of the spatial conditions.

Conclusions

As a result of this research, several conclusions which are representative could be drawn from the qualitative and quantitative analysis of the data obtained. In this view, the most important are the following conclusions:

1. In the preschool institutions in Skopje and its neighbourhood there are no optimal conditions for appropriate pedagogical organizing and performing of children's play. This particularly applies to spatial conditions as well as toys, means and didactic material as requirements for appropriate pedagogical organizing and performing of children's play and play activities.

2. In the educational programme for preschool education play and play activities have the correct treatment the role and meaning regarding the development and education of pre-school children which is obvious in emphasizing the role of play in the intellectual, moral, aesthetic and physical development of the pre-school child as well as in the different types of play and play activities included in the programme (creative, motory, didactic).

3. The actual norms and standards, space, equipment, toys, means and didactic materials comply with the requirements for psycho-physical development of the child as well as with the minimal requirements for appropriate organizing and performing of play and play activities in the educational process. The minimal norms and standards which are not respected in practice, offer satisfactory level of conducting educational work in the preschool institutions.

4. The majority of the preschool teachers have a positive attitude towards the importance of play in the development of the preschool child. Their attitude is seen in the importance they give to play in the complete development of the child's personality, effects of the application of play in the directed activities and the role of play in the development of all components of the child's personality.

5. The preschool teachers see the playing conditions in their preschool institutions as unsatisfactory. This primarily applies to the spatial conditions, the number of children in the group as well as the quantity of toys, means and didactic materials.

6. The material conditions, space, equipment and toys, means and didactic materials necessary for appropriate organizing and performing of children's play are unsatisfactory in the preschool institutions. This particularly applies to the organization and performing of the play in free and directed activities.

7. Organization of play in the preschool institutions is discrepant with the contemporary needs and interests of the preschool child regarding the application of the forms and methods as well as regarding the means used in play organization for the free and directed activities.

This research examined play only from the aspect of its appropriate pedagogical organizing and performing in the pre-school institutions. Numerous are the problems in direct connection with play and play activities which in our circumstances haven't been at all or have been a little studied and examined.

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The Views of Children, Parents and Caregivers on Education

CHILDREN, PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS: THREE VIEWS OF CARE AND EDUCATION

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Introduction

Most people judge the quality of child care on the basis of the well being of the children and parents involved. Are the children happy and lively? Do the parents feel welcome? And does the day care centre help to reduce the stress produced by combining work and children? They also look at the caregivers. Do they look friendly and do they behave with enthusiasm towards the children? In everyday life good quality means a good cooperation between the three parties directly involved: the children, parents and teachers. But very little research has been carried out into this cooperation. What exactly goes on in child care situations is, for most researchers, still a black box.

For too long researchers and policy makers have considered themselves to be the only 'experts' able to define quality in child care (Moss & Pence, 1994; Singer, 1992, 1993). That children, parents and teachers have their own expertise in this area is often denied. Without justification, as I hope to show in this introduction. Without listening to the three parties directly involved, research will remain superficial: it will not touch on the subjects of real importance. However, in order to be able to listen, researchers will have to put their own way of thinking, including the accepted theories, into perspective. Because children, parents and teachers can and most probably will upset all sorts of academic theories taken for granted up to now.

The children

I will start with the children. All children have ideas about education. And some children, like some adults, even have a clear theory. One of these children is Maarten. Maarten is a Dutch boy aged thirteen. He lives with four brothers and sisters with a friend of mine. Recently Maarten asked me what sort of work I did. I told him that I thought about the way we could take good care of children while their parents are working. But it's great when they're not there, was his first reaction. He was probably thinking back to his very bad experiences with parents and foster parents.

I tried to defend my work, and said: young children can't take care of themselves. Maarten agreed with me, but he couldn't understand why one had to think about it for so long: after all it wasn't difficult! I asked him how it should be done. Well he said, if you're looking after children you should just do something you enjoy doing yourself, build aeroplanes or something (that's what he enjoys doing). Then the children come and watch, ask questions or want to help. If they get bored with that after a while, they go and play together, and if they need something you just go and help them. That was all according to Maarten.

For a moment I was really surprised by his answer. He said exactly the opposite to that which is generally accepted in developmental psychology: no exclusive attention for the child, but just doing *what you enjoy*. However, thinking about it I realized there was more in it than I first thought. Maarten pointed out something that I know from my own experience and research: namely that most children want a feeling of togetherness and want to join in with adults. If a teacher starts enthusiastically to make things from clay, a few minutes later she will have a group of curious toddlers around her. There's nothing more exciting than a group of workmen breaking the street up outside the house. Children are extremely interested in the life and work of adults. For instance, Rheingold (1982) and Beach (1988) found that toddlers help their parents spontaneously with dusting, washing up, cooking and other household chores. The children do not feel as though they are playing, as far as they are concerned they are working. Tizard & Hughes (1984) found that this adult environment at home encouraged the children to question their mother about what she was doing and about family events etc.

In mainstream developmental theories such as the attachment theory, the young child is seen as being disconnected from the social context in which it lives together with adults. Theoretical concepts such as the responsiveness of the upbringer, are based implicitly on the assumption that children need separate attention. This separation of children is a typically western phenomenon. It is connected to industrialization, separation of paid work outside the home and family, and the development of separate institutions for children, such as child care centres and schools. According to Kessen (1983), developmental psychology has developed from this western culture where children are seen as a separate category. In turn, developmental psychology influences the way children are treated in our culture. For instance, by studying the interactions between mother and child separated from the household work done by mothers. This means that we lose sight of the basic insight at the theoretical level, that children want to grow up. And by growing up, Maarten means learning by joining in with adults.

Maarten therefore disagreed entirely with my view that young children learn by playing. According to him, playing is having fun, a good romp or playing a game. A child playing with bricks isn't actually playing, he's thinking hard and learning. According to Maarten, his four year old brother agrees with him.

Maarten is full of criticism of adults who do not take enough care, with the result that children have accidents or are abused without anyone intervening. As far as he is concerned, taking good care of children primarily involves eating, drinking and safety, and being there if the child needs you. This concept is a long way from the way in which 'sensitive responsivity' is operationalized in research. Researchers analyse the subtieties in the ongoing interactions between mother and child. Maartens talks about the results: are caregivers trustworthy. Perhaps lots of young children think in this basic way about the trustworthiness and love of adults. After all, the results of meta-analyses of research into the connection between the sensitivity of parents and the safe bonding of children show that this connection only exists to a small degree: on average not more than 0.16 (Goldsmith & Alansky, 1987).

According to Maarten, children do not need continuous attention from adults. He says that is 'interfering'. According to him you can see that adults often don't enjoy playing with children. As an example of this he mentions the play therapy he had to undergo. "You have to sit in a cage or small room and play with them, but you can tell they don't enjoy it because they talk in that silly way." He doesn't say anything more then, because you can tell the adults just talk *about* you.

Maarten wants adults to think together *with* children. If something goes wrong the adults can advise the children and tell them why they think something is a good idea and make plans. Only if something is dangerous should they say that something *must* be done. But instead of this, adults are always making up rules and being bossy. Maarten says that this scares children, because they might do everything wrong.

Maarten makes a clear distinction between what children share with one another and what they share with adults. He thinks that adults underestimate children. In this he is supported by researchers like Musatti & Mueller (1985), Corsaro & Emiliani (1992) and Stambok & Verba (1986). They studied the cultures that children create with one another in Italian and French crèches. Like Maarten, they give examples of the way young children communicate with each other non-verbally, make rules together, negotiate and make jokes. 'Pretend play' is the way slightly older children get to grips with the big adult world and all its puzzles at their own level (Fein, 1989). Equality like this cannot be offered by adults.

This puts the one-sided emphasis of researchers on the mother or caregiver/child relationship more into perspective. This one-sided emphasis on the mother probably says more about adult values in our culture rather than the children's.

Maarten considers constant attention from adults to be 'interfering'. Stambok & Verba (1986) also show that teachers who react to all children's signals disturb the children's play with one another. The children then become more orientated towards the teacher than to one another. Generally speaking, it is sufficient for young children to have eye contact with the caregiver or teacher. They then know that they are seen and that the teacher thinks they can manage on their own.

Research into children's own opinion of child care is still scarce. Instead of being asked about things, they are more often observed, like Maarten in the play therapy room. However, there are exceptions. For instance in Denmark it has been established that children are entitled to their own opinion (Langsted, 1994). Within the child care world this has given rise to projects in order to find out what children think of their daily life. In one project 13 and 14 year olds studied what 3 to 5 year olds have to say about kindergarten. After a two day visit to a kindergarten, they returned with a list of examples of abuse of children's rights. They asked the teachers critical questions like: why do adults get coffee and tea between meals, and are the children only allowed to drink water from the tap? Why are children only allowed to eat at mealtimes and not whenever they are hungry? Why must children play outside if they would rather play inside, just because adults think it's healthier for them? They gave many examples of the unequal rights for children and unnecessary interference by adults, that Maarten finds so annoying.

In another project teachers took a critical look at the rules they had established in the day care centre for children from 6 months to 3 years of age. They discovered that they often tried to regulate the children's behaviour by forbidding things. Once they gave the children the right to say 'no', a great number of rules turned out to be unnecessary. Only the rules directly involved with safety were maintained. The result was that fewer conflicts arose between teachers and children. However, there were more conflicts amongst the children. But this is seen as the children's right to solve their own conflicts, and in most cases they are well able to do this (Langsted, 1994).

We know very little about children's views on their upbringing, but it seems to me quite probable that the central concepts they use to evaluate quality differ substantially from those of mainstream developmental psychologists. Probably:

* Children place give central place to the inequality of power between adults and children and unfairness between them; something not mentioned by developmental psychology. From their perspective they

have to deal with giants. Giants they love and need, but who nevertheless also control their lives.

* Children think in a more differentiated way about their relationship with their parents, caregivers and teachers than developmental psychologists. They want to grow up, learn from adults and think with them, and not be excluded from the adult world. Or, to mention a developmental psychologist in support of their viewpoint: as Vygotsky states, they need a 'zone of proximal development'. Further, they want to be well taken care of, they want to be safe. But they do not want adults to keep on being so bossy and interfering with everything.
* Children want to be taken seriously. They do not only play, they work as well; learning is an enormous effort. Contacts with children have their own value, different to those with adults. Other children are partners at their own level to fight with, to look at, to share their jokes and curiosity.

The parents

Now the parents' perspective. The child care demands of parents have generated little interest from developmental psychologists, specifically in countries with a poor child care policy (Larner & Phillips, 1994; Singer, 1992, 1993). I'm thinking here of countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom and my own country, the Netherlands. As I showed elsewhere, mainstream developmental theories, concepts and research questions are deeply anchored in the moral and social-political choices and problems of the middle class (Singer, 1992, 1993). In the above mentioned countries, this has meant that developmental theories were, and to some extent still are, rooted in a pedagogic concept of a family upbringing with the mother at home. Traditionally, child care outside the home was only recommended when mothers were considered lacking in some way, for instance in families from lower social classes and ethnic minorities: professional care had to compensate for the deficiency of the home upbringing.

This resulted in two research streams which dominated ideas about child care for a long time. On one side there was research into the negative effects of child care on the emotional development and the mother-child relationship. This was used in discussions about the right of middle class mothers to work outside the home. On the other side there was research into the positive effects on the cognitive development if it concerned children from disadvantaged families participating in intervention programmes. This research had to prove the superiority of professional care. In both research streams the effects of day care were measured on the basis of standards generated in the study of middle class home-reared children. In both research streams the values, standards and child care needs of parents were ignored.

There was complete indifference to the stress within families as a result of the lack of good child care facilities outside the home, and for the risks that children run of having overtired parents, changing forms of care and bad experiences with childminders or teachers. In this way child-aimed interests are made to oppose the child care needs of the parents. Even those in favour of child care outside the home, such as Clarke-Stewart, Scarr or Phillips, were, for a long time, forced to spend a great deal of their research time on proving that child care was not something morally reprehensible.

However, the indifference towards what parents want is also connected to scientific philosophy. Developmental psychologists all too often started from the presupposition that, on the basis of their superior and universal knowledge of the child, they were the only ones qualified to make statements about what was good for the 'normal' development of the child (Kessen, 1983; Singer, 1992, 1993). They were not aware of the value-basis of their theories I mentioned earlier. They were the 'experts' and parents were supposed to be in need of their knowledge, and not the other way round. In this scientific tradition the parents' and children's needs and knowledge could be ignored.

During the past fifteen years, a new stream of research has started: the question of quality has become central, and more attention is being paid to what parents want. Through this, it has become apparent just how far away scientific thinking is from parents' thinking, especially because of the presupposed superiority of expert knowledge (Larner & Phillips, 1994; Singer, 1991; Singer & Miltenburg, 1994). I will give a few examples.

Research into quality was first directed towards structural characteristics such as group size, caregivers' or teachers' level of training and so on. This is important for establishing minimum licensing requirements. But apparently parents seldom look at structural characteristics. For instance, many Dutch and American parents are not interested in diplomas, that is in expert knowledge. According to them you can't teach somebody to love children. Above all they want someone who has a personal interest in them and their child. Only when the child is two or three years old do parents attach more value to education and diplomas.

Another example: until recently research concentrated mainly on day care centres with fully trained teachers. But many parents prefer informal care by family, friends or childminders nearby, especially for babies (Van Dijke, Terpstra & Hermanns, 1994). For example Dutch parents think that the childminders' approach is more personal and that they are more flexible with regard to the parents' wishes.

Because Dutch experts can only think of parents in need of experts' guidance, much emphasis is placed on parent education and support in the upbringing from child day care centres. But parents appear to value the support of the teachers more as a discussion between a colleague upbringer. They don't want experts who stand above them (Singer, 1991). Dutch and American parents also apparently prefer to ask advice from someone they trust from their immediate environment rather than from experts (Larner & Phillips, 1994). Besides that, Dutch parents also want teachers to listen to their advice on handling their child.

The question of daily separations of infant from mother also appears in a different light in research amongst parents. Separation anxiety is a problem of children *and* their parents and not only the children (Hock, McBride & Gnezda, 1989). Parents often suffer more from the fear of separation than the children, especially if the children are still very young and they would have preferred to look after the child themselves. In our research among Dutch parents, we found that parents more often had problems getting used to the separation if the children were younger than seven months old, and the children had more problems if they were older than seven months (Singer, 1991). But, if the parents really support their choice, nearly all the children soon get used to child care outside the home.

There is apparently a diversity of value orientations among parents. But very often practical factors are decisive (Van Dijke, Terpstra & Hermanns, 1994). A great many parents have no choice after all, and are happy if they can find day care that fits in with their working hours and where the children are happy.

To summarize:

* In the first place parents probably look for care that will minimize the family stress caused by combining work and children.
* Particularly if the children are still very young, they want a personal approach and individual interest in their child.
* Parents want the opportunity to discuss things on an equal footing with a colleague-upbringer: teacher.

The caregivers

Finally the caregivers' perspective. The task they face is to build up a relationship and work together with possibly as many as 36 young children, if children come part-time to the care centre as is often the case in the Netherlands. Behind all these children are one or two parents who also require personal contact, and a good link up between the care given in the day care situation and the care at home. Caregivers are faced with the task of forming a community with all these children and the adults.

The complex network of relationships is a far cry from the mother-child dyad mainly studied by researchers. This limits the applicability of the scientific knowledge for caregivers in child centres and family day care. This wouldn't be such a problem if the researchers explicated the social context of their theories. But the attachment theory or the Piagetian theory for instance, claim universal validity: in theory, statements are made about natural laws in the development of all children, no matter what the social context in which they grow up. Caregivers trying to apply such theories in their situation are set off on the wrong foot.

Take for instance the presupposition that caregivers should be sensitive and responsive to the signals of individual children for their feeling of safety. A demand like this in a group of 14 toddlers leads to very short and superficial contacts between the teacher and child. For example, Hutt et al. (1989) found that in English nursery schools the contact between teacher and child lasted on average no longer the three quarters of a minute each time.

Particularly those children in need of extra attention will suffer from this individualistic and teacher-centred approach. Without an understanding and appreciation of group processes between young children, caregivers or teachers experience every extra child in the group as an extra burden. They lose the overall picture, and the result is that a few noticeable children are picked out for the individual attention: we are talking here about negative attention. For example, Swaders (1995) studied a change in group size from 7 to 8 children. When the group becomes larger, the teachers become significantly more negative and controlling towards the children who were specially placed because they were in a so-called 'high risk group'. This, while the 'high-risk' children's behaviour didn't change.

There is quite a lot of research which shows that teachers, probably due to helplessness tend to misuse their power with regard to so-called problem children. Examples are: doing too many things for handicapped children so they don't get the chance to do things for themselves; ignoring quiet introvert children; and particularly giving aggressive children negative and disciplinary attention (Tari et al., 1989).

It is also untrue that all children are better off in small groups with more attention from the teacher. For instance, Homans (1995) found that hyperactive children with little concentration are interested in something for longer when they just play in the group, than if they only have to share the teacher's attention with one other child. There are even studies which show that the smaller the group the more interfering the teacher, and the smaller the group the more children there are who show anxious bonding behaviour (Phillips et al., 1987).

In my view, interference by caregivers is related to a lack of theories about, and appreciation of what young children learn from and share with one another. Caregivers or teachers have a great deal of direct and indirect influence on how children play together: by the way they design the environment and the play and work material they offer. It is the teacher's decision whether the children play undisturbed and whether to give a new impulse to the game. With regard to this, it is a good idea to remember Maarten's advice about doing something you enjoy. A day care centre is a world created especially for children, which lacks the challenges taken for granted in an environment where adults also live and work. Teachers have to consciously make the opening into the adult world. By making music or painting; by organising excursions or inviting other people in. They also can involve the older children with the care of the babies, and encourage contact between children and household staff. The latter happens in Italian crèches where the woman working in the kitchen and doing household chores often fulfils a sort of granny role (Corsaro & Emiliani, 1992).

Encouraging children involves not only actively asking questions or setting them to work, but also doing something exciting and interesting which will make the children start asking questions. The latter is a very stimulating way of starting up conversations. Tizard & Hughes (1984) found that teachers generally take the initiative to talk; they will ask a pedagogical question about something the child is doing; the child gives a short answer; end of conversation. A real exchange rarely took place. It is difficult, for adults as well, to answer questions *about* something in which you are totally involved. A perspective change, from 'being involved' to 'reflection about', is something we should not ask of children. The few real conversations observed by Tizard & Hughes (1984) took place when the teacher was busy doing something and the children asked questions out of curiosity.

What caregivers need are theories based on their work situation, that give answers to questions such as: how do you help children to feel safe in a group when a non-parent is looking after them? What do children learn from one another and when do they need an adult there? How do you prevent formation of a sterile, boring, child world? How can you analyse the effect of power between the adults and children and between the children themselves?

These theories should concern not only children, but also the parents. Caregivers must pioneer in this field as well. After all, traditionally the professional caregiver is someone who is hierarchically above the parents; this is also a heritage of the previously mentioned scientific philosophy. Parents took their children to professional upbringers when their child needed education (the teacher), or if there were problems in the upbringing (the therapist or social worker). But, in child day care, the parents' interests must be taken directly into account, for instance their working hours.

Shared care of very young children requires consultation and adaptability, in which values and standards often play a role which is difficult to define. Dutch child care centres are often not adapted to parents' involvement (Singer & Miltenburg, 1994). Within professional institutions it is apparently difficult to evaluate one's own professional perspective.

Luckily, there is a great deal of action in this area, at the international level as well. In many different countries experiments are being carried out into new consultation forms and ways of linking up to the various cultural backgrounds of diverse groups of parents. However, the fact remains that this pioneering work in countries like the Netherlands is, to a great extent, taking place without the help or support of theories from the scientific world.

Thinking together

I started this introduction by pointing out that what exactly goes on in child care is to a large degree like a black box for researchers. I have tried to clarify that researchers will never understand anything about the daily practice of child care as long as they are not open to the perspectives of the children, parents and caregivers involved. In other words:

1. The claim of superiority must be relinquished. Psychologists must explicate their own values and standards, and place themselves at the service of the parents, caregivers and children.
2. Work must begin on (new) context-bound theories that offer an insight into development processes under new pedagogic conditions of shared care for children.
3. The children's, parents' and caregivers' own theories deserve recognition and further empirical research into their tenability. A way must be found to link these theories or perspectives, without allowing any one of them to become dominant.

Relinquishing the claim to superiority is also important for the relationships between experts. For instance, Helen Penn (1994) gives an almost dramatic report of how this narrow minded view of 'what is good for the child' among Scottish politicians and professionals working in nursery schools, day care centres and family day care led to an endless conflict, and eventually to her resigning her position. A more coherent approach to early childhood services Helen Penn worked on, broke down as the result of conflicts arising from different values, traditions and perceived interests. When experts and politicians get lost in arguments, parents and their children are always the losers. Unfortunately, the situation described by Helen Penn is all too familiar to me, and I think that goes for many people working for any length of time in child care.

I look with a certain amount of jealousy at countries where a basic 'yes' has been said at the political level to various forms of care and education of young children. I'm thinking particularly of Northern Italy and the Scandinavian countries, and in some ways also of the former East Germany (Melhuish & Moss, 1991; Moss & Pence, 1994). What I notice specifically is that a political decision precedes scientific research. Because a real choice is made for specific forms of care, people can actually start to work on them. Sometimes, as in Italy, with a great deal of parental involvement right from the start. Only then do the research questions arise, together with practical questions and the goals one wishes to attain. Psychologists can then play an important supportive and innovative role. In the development of the so-called Reggio-pedagogics, Musatti for instance played an important part through her research in children's' relationships with one another. In this way context-bound theories are developed within a normative framework shared by all involved; theories which, by the way, have received international acclaim.

But, just as important in my view, is the research carried out by the Danish children I mentioned earlier and the advice of children like Maarten. In order to open the black box of child care, all involved must be heard: thinking together as Maarten calls it. I share this ideal with him.

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HOW CAN WE AS PARENTS AND EDUCATORS FOSTER METACOGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT?

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The basic impulse to research the impact of social interaction on metacognitive development comes from three sources:

1. a need for a theoretical reconsideration of metacognition from a Vygotskian perspective
2. a practical concern for metacognitive development being neglected in the schooling system in Yugoslavia and the burden of cognitive development put on the shoulders of the parents.
3. a need to anchor metacognition-fostering intervention programs both in research of metacognitive development and in thorough considerations of its cultural specificity.

Reconsidering metacognition

Although Brown, discussing the theoretical sources of metacognition (Brown,1987) highlighted four pertinent issues in psychology (verbal report as data from classical introspective psychology, executive control from cognitive psychology, self-regulation from Piaget and the transference from other-regulation to self-regulation from Vygotsky), only two of these had substantial impact on metacognitive research: the cognitive (Sternberg, 1982, 1984; Demetriou, Efklides and Platsidou, 1993) and Vygotskian (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986; Wertsch, 1979). However, a complete integration even of these two approaches was not achieved, neither on the conceptual nor on the empirical level, which eventually contributed to the split of metacognition (Brown, 1994, Wertsch, 1994) into self-regulation and theory of mind.

In a sense this split was already built-in in the very concept of metacognition, covering a broad range of phenomena - knowledge of one's own cognitive functioning, regulation of one's own cognitive activity and experiential corollaries of this activity (Flavell and Wellman, 1977), without the explication of integrative links between them. Hence, knowledge and regulation tended to be dealt with separately and in a particularized way, and the experiential aspect of metacognition gradually faded out of the scope of metacognitive research. This state of affairs undoubtedly resulted also from methodological problems in registering and measuring metacognitive phenomena, due to the hidden and subtle character of these processes, their sensitivity to contextual variations and the ease in falsifying introspective accounts. However, as much as this particularization seems understandable from the point of view of scientific rigor, it can be considered unfortunate if one bears in mind that metacognition gained interest predominantly due to its potential heuristic value derived from its overarching nature.

Metacognition as a Vygotskian topic

Capitalizing upon the theory of Vygotsky in a more complete manner might prove fruitful in overcoming the conceptual and theoretical difficulties of metacognitive research, briefly described above. Indeed, metacognition can be considered a Vygotskian topic par excellence. Metacognitive development can be conceived as the core phenomenon of development envisioned by Vygotsky, since it involves the mastering of one's own mental processes, their voluntary control and establishing links between different functions and creating new functional systems. In this vein, Braten (1991a, b,1992) in his reconsideration of the theoretical sources of metacognition finds all four sources, identified by Brown, linked together and embedded in Vygotsky's theory.

Braten's analysis focuses predominantly on highlighting the ways in which knowledge and regulation mutually enhance each other in the course of development described by Vygotsky and reinforced by many empirical investigations later on. Hence, it is a that Braten's general conclusion one of the main conceptual problems with metacognition (the knowledge/regulation split) should have not existed at all, if the potentials of the full scope of Vygotsky's theory had been taken into account earlier on.

In addition to this fundamental benefit, two other points or implications of a Vygotskian approach should be stressed.

The experiential aspect of metacognition, although listed in the earliest definitions of metacognition (Flavell and Wellman, 1977) aside from the investigations of the "feeling of knowing" phenomenon (Nelson, et. al. 1984, 1986), has not gained much attention from investigators. Neither was its relation to knowledge/awareness and regulation satisfactorily resolved.

However, the theory of Vygotsky opens the possibility of a new view of the role of metacognitive experiences as well. Development is conceived by Vygotsky neither as maturation nor as learning but as a unique interplay between the natural and the cultural processes - it is the cultural framing of personal experiences. Hesitancy, confusion, doubt, not-being-sure-what-to-do-next, as well as surprise, excitement, eagerness, delight, the "aha" experience, the scale from feeling uncertainty to feeling certainty, and other "cognitive emotions" (Scheffler, 1991) and "intellectual passions" (Perkins,1992) which constitute the "soft stuff" thinking is made of, might productively enlarge the list of metacognitive experiences. Dealing with these experiences, their legitimization and building regulation and awareness upon them, so painfully lacking from the teaching process in schools (Kovac-Cerovic and Seizova, 1991), might be the main road for enhancing or even constructing metacognitive development. Moreover, in this way, metacognition is seen as becoming culturally shaped, and variations in cultural ways of regulating and being aware of one's own metal processes might become visible on the level of metacognition.

Also, meaning making, as the basic activity of the interpretive mind (Bruner, 1990) can be conceived as one of the core metacognitive processes, in the cognitive analyses embedded in planning, but in non-laboratory settings clearly distinct and recognizable.

Hence, the basic underlying assumption of this study is derived from the Vygotskian conception of development. The mechanism of metacognitive development is seen as internalization, proceeding from other-regulation or joint regulation to self-regulation, i.e. from being interpsychical toward becoming intrapsychical. The process of metacognitive development is expected to occur in adult-child interactions in the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD; Vygotsky, 1978), in the course of which the adult is expected to gradually hand over metacognitive control to the child (Wertsch, 1978).

However, Wertsch's initial description of how metacognitive functioning is distributed in the mother-child dyad, and changed in the course of solving a task (Wertsch, 1978) has been subject to critical reexaminations. Kontos (1983) in her microanalytic study did not find enough empirical evidence to support Wertsch's conclusion of the roots of metacognition being in the mother-child interaction. On the other hand, Elbers et. al. (1992) found that Wertsch's account is understating the role of the child. When using more naturalistic situations, they found (as did others, e.g. Ignjatovic-Savic, et.al, 1988) that the child is much more active in constructing the actual nature of interaction than in the jigsaw-puzzle task used by Wertsch.

Also, descriptions of the mechanisms underlying interaction in the ZPD, condensed into different metaphors ("scaffolding", Wood, 1986; "appropriation", Rogoff, 1990; "construction Zone" Newman, Griffin and Cole, 1989; "negotiation of meanings", Wertsch, 1989) acknowledge the complexities of adult-child interaction in the ZPD, but nevertheless leave us hesitant in respect of the actual ways in which metacognitive development is constructed through social interaction.

The purpose of this study, stated in the most general terms, was to make the necessary preliminary steps in order to approach investigations of metacognitive development and its enhancement in the course of mother-child interaction, as well as to open the road for research-based educational interventions fostering metacognitive development.

The Study

The following study aimed to describe the ways in which mothers are (or are not) using the opportunity, created by interacting with their children on tasks which are in the Zone of Proximal Development of the children to foster the child's metacognitive development. The features of this interaction which are considered most important for metacognitive development to occur are derived from the theoretical reconsideration of metacognition in the sociocultural perspective, described above.

They are:

- handing over of metacognitive control to the child and rendering requested activities meaningful for him
- making metacognitive regulation transparent for the child (especially planning, monitoring and checking)
- promoting metacognitive awareness (using a language of thinking in interacting with the child)
- dealing with metacognitive experiences (making them possible and legitimate for the child, and building upon them appropriately, both in respect of the timing and the developmental directedness of the adult's interventions)

The actual research is dealing with mother-child interaction in situations resembling every-day activities (games and school-assignments) and targeted at the age when metacognitive development is most likely starting to unfold (7-8 years). It is embedded in a greater longitudinal project investigating mother-child interaction and its developmental effects, which was conducted 1983-93, at the Institute of Psychology in Belgrade.

Sample

The original sample for the longitudinal study consisted of 50 infants from Belgrade, stratified by gender (25 boys and 25 girls), age (9, 12, 15, 18, and 21 months) and by their mother's education (25 % elementary school, 50 % high school, 25 % college graduated). For the second visit, when the majority of data for this study has been collected, 42 children and their mothers from the original sample were investigated (33 in first grade, 9 in their last preschool year). For the third data collection period the sample comprised 32 fourth grade and 9 third grade children.

Design

The general strategy was to analyze mother-child interaction with respect to metacognitive stimulativeness and to assess the correlations of the interactive indices with metacognitive development, intelligence and grades.

Most situations for assessing mother-child interaction and the child's metacognitive development were designed for the purposes of the present study in the second data collection period (at the children's age 7-8 years). All investigations were conducted in the child's home, and were video or audio-taped. The tapes were analyzed and coded by two independent observers for each situation (a different two for each situation).

The home visit started with situations assessing metacognitive development of the child, the mother being not present. Later on, the mothers were asked to join and help the child, and the interactive situations were administered.

The children's intelligence was tested with the New Belgrade Revision of the Binet (Milinkovic at al, 1976). Information on school-grades was gathered from the first semester of the school-year, as being more discriminative than those from the second semester.

Procedure

Metacognitive development was assessed through the following indices/situations:

Metamemory Interview (MMI). A modification of Kreutzer, Leonard and Flavell's metamemory interviewing procedure was used. The modification consisted of a slight cultural adaptation of the questions and tasks and the development of a scoring system for assessing each child's metamemoric functioning (Stanisic, 1991).

Guessing Game (GG). This game assessed the metacognitive regulation of the child's searching activity and the ease with which the child adopted an efficient searching strategy was assessed. A set of 32 cards (used for assessing concept formation by Bruner, Goodnow and Austin, 1956) were displayed in front of the child (each category in a row) and a game initiated where the child or examiner were trying to find out (within 10 guesses, followed by YES or NO answers) which of the pictures the other is thinking of. Examiner and child alternated, there were 5 phases, 3 for assessing the child (1.-baseline, the other 2 after modeling) and two in which the examiner displayed (first tacitly, then explicitly, by turning upside down the categories of pictures for which the child said NO) the most efficient searching strategy (searching for categories instead of particular items, and keeping track of questions and narrowing down possible guesses by elimination of categories).

Forbidden Colors Game (FCG). This game was used to assess the child's aptness to use external aid as a mediator of his/her own thinking processes. It is an adaptation of Leontiev's experiment, reported by Vygotsky and Van der Veer (Vygotsky, 1978, Van der Veer, 1994). It is a verbal game containing 2 series of approximately 15 question-answer episodes. The Examiner asks questions, some of them referring to colors. In answering, the child has to follow 2 rules of the game: she must not mention the "forbidden color" named by the Examiner in advance, and must not mention any color twice during the same series of questions. In the second phase, 10 colored cards were given to the child in order to aid him in answering with greater success to the next series of questions, but without actual explanation of how, when and why to use them. The level of appropriate card usage in phase two and percentage of correct color answers were registered.

Metacognitively stimulative aspects of mother-child interaction were assessed in the following situations:

Forbidden Colors Game with Mother (FCGM). This situation constituted the third phase of the FCG when the mother (not present at phase 1 and 2) was asked to help the child to learn to use the cards in order to play better.

Guessing Game with Mother (GGM). In this situation the mothers' way of promoting the child's categorical search was assessed in a more spontaneous game then in GG (guessing the object in the room the other is thinking of).

Underlining Text (UT). This situation was introduced only to grade 1 children. The mother was asked to help the child in selecting and underlining the most important parts of a two passage text from a 2nd grade textbook.

From all these situations the following variables were extracted:

- a scale of metacognitive problems created by the mother in the course of interaction (from no problems detected, through insufficient upgrading of the child's process, not providing a mental model, not providing opportunity for the child's metacognitive experiences to occur, these experiences overruled, up to straightforwardly creating metacognitive problems for the child by confusing messages, several contrary instructions etc.) (MC NOP)
- the assessed zone of the mother's intervention (future, potential, actual, past, according to an elaboration of the concept of the ZPD in Ignjatovic-Savic, Kovac-Cerovic, Plut and Pesikan, 1988) rated for each situation separately, then combined in 2 variables: the best (Zone optimistically assessed, ZOOPT) and the worst (Zone pessimistically assessed, ZOPES)

- the mother's activity in participating (AKTM)
- the mother's directiveness (DIRM)

From the Underlining Text situation, as being the most sensitive and fruitful situation for the phenomena under the scope of the present study several additional variables were selected:

- two representative indices of the child's negotiated activity and role in the task through a) who the actual underlining agent was and how independently he/she translated the selected important part into a line with a definite starting and ending point, UAG; and b) who was the important part selecting agent, IMPAG;
- a variable tapping the meaning making aspect of metacognition through the ways mothers mediated the main feature of the task to the child, i.e. the genres in translating the "underlining the important parts of the text" request (MEDT);
- the child's participation in thinking allowed or asked for by the mother, from an explicit invitation to think with the respective straightforward use of the language of thinking to the denial of any possibility for the child of having thinking experiences while solving the task (ITH).

Results and Discussion

Indices of metacognitive development

Correlations between different tasks are shown on table 1.

Table 1. Correlations of indices of development

	Binet	MM	FCG (%+)	FCG (CARD)	GG (PH.1)
MM	.57**				
FCG (%+)	.48*	.16			
FCG (CARD)	.56*	.44	.22		
GG (PH.1)	.23	.31	.13	.53*	
GG (PH.2)	.03	.17	.19	.27	.62**

** P<0.01
* P<0.05

Most of the correlations of the different indices across these tasks are low, not significant, except for four cases:

- FCG card usage with GG strategic guessing at phase 1. (.53*), accordingly, these 2 situations are connected, but tapping somewhat different aspects of MC functioning
- FCG card usage with IQ .56*

- FCG percentage of correct answers in the first series (without cards) with IQ .48*
- MM with IQ .57**, hence MM seems to be a correlate of IQ, but clearly a different phenomenon.

According to this evidence, metacognition cannot be conceived as a homogenous phenomenon. Theoretical elaborations of metacognition do indeed approve such a finding. However, since the two included games focus on the regulative aspect of metacognition, we must conclude that even in this respect we are dealing with a set of related but not overlapping mechanisms. However, card usage seems to detect an important process, related to all other, otherwise not related variables, and in this sense it might reflect the organizing nature of metacognition.

Indices of mother-child interaction

Correlations between different interactive indices are shown in table 2.

Table 2. Correlation of interactive indices

	MCNOP	ZOOPT	ZOPES	AKTM	DIRM	UAG	IMPAG	MEDT
ZOOPT	.24							
ZOPES	-.72**	-.58*						
AKTM	-.31	.25	.03					
DIRM	-.46*	-.23	.39	.36				
UAG	.49*	.38	-.25	-.37	-.44			
IMPAG	.45	.30	-.24	-.64**	-.44	.61*		
MEDT	.46	.43	-.34	-.57*	-.32	.58*	.79**	
ITH	.75**	.36	-.53*	-.62**	-.58*	.68*	.78**	.83**

*p<.05 **p<.01

Clearly, the highest correlations have been detected between the variables derived from the same situation, UT; specifically, the way the mothers mediated the task to the child and the extent they involved them in thinking, as well as the child's active role in selecting the important parts of the text.

At the same time, the level of the child's involvement in thinking (asked for or permitted by the mother, and encompassing the use of the respective language of thinking by the mother) seems to be a focal variable of interaction, having significant negative correlations with the pessimistic appraisal of the developmental directedness of the mother's interventions (the worst of all registered types in the same dyad), her directiveness and level of activity/engagement in solving the tasks, but high positive correlations with all other variables except the optimistic appraisal of the developmental directedness of the mother's interventions (the best of all displayed interactions by the same dyad). The two indices of the child's active role in underlining and selecting the important parts of the text (UAG and IMAG), although connected, but not overlapping, also correlate with the most important interactive indices.

The scale of metacognitive problems created by the mother (from no problems to severe problems) seems to be a crucial variable, having significant negative correlations with the ZOPES and the mother's directiveness (DIRM), but positive ones with the extent the child is engaged in underlining and the explicitness of the invitation to think received from the mother.

The mother's directiveness and activity behave in a similar way, showing either that the coding system did not succeed in disentangling them, or that active task-related involvement of the mothers has a similar detrimental effect on other aspects of interaction the unholding as has her directiveness. In any case, both activity and directiveness are negatively correlated with all other indices of interaction, except ZOPES.

ZOPES and ZOOPT although behaving clearly differently, and having a significant negative intercorrelation, do not seem mutually exclusive, which justifies the inclusion of both ways of treating the variety of developmental directedness of intervention displayed by the mothers in the course of interacting with the child on different tasks.

It has to be noted, that the variables extracted on the basis of the theoretical reconsideration of metacognition in the light of socio-cultural theory (dealing with metacognitive experiences, meaning making and the language of thinking) have been shown according to the correlational evidence to be important indices of the mother-child interaction. The more global variable, ZOPES, also seems to be sensitive to the ways mothers cope with metacognitive experiences of the children.

Interactive indices and variables of metacognitive and cognitive development

Significant correlations between interactive and developmental indices are shown on table 3.

Table 3. Correlations between interactive and developmental indices.

BINET		FCG (card)		MM		SCHOOL GRADES	
MCNOP	.48**	ZOOPT	.40*	UAG	.50*	ZOOPT-LANGUAGE	.50*
MEDT	.58**	ZOPES	-.43*	MEDT	.56*	ZOOPT-SCIENCE	.43*
ITH	.51**	(MCNOP, UAG, MEDT, ITH close to significance				ZOOPT-GENERAL	.50*
UAG	.52**						

*p<.05
**p<.01

The most important interactive indices are found to be correlated with the BINET IQ, and, partially metamemory (which is also connected to IQ). Card usage in FCG and the school-grades collected 3 years later correlate significantly only with the most general interactive indices, the developmental directedness of the mother's interventions.

If the interactive indices focused on in this study depict stable interactive features (for additional evidence from the longitudinal study see Kovac-Cerovic, 1995), and relying on the general ideas of social constructivism found in Vygotsky's works, it can be concluded that mother-child interaction has already impacted metacognitive and hence cognitive development of the children by the age of 7-8 years.

Of special interest is the fact that, according to the present evidence, the features of interaction which have the greatest impact on development can be clearly encompassed in the Vygotskian framework as described and elaborated upon in this article. These are: making metacognitive experiences possible and legitimate for the child and building upon them (as reflected through MCNOP and ZOOPT); rendering the task meaningful for the child (as reflected through MEDT); promoting metacognitive awareness (as reflected through ITH); and handing over the control to the child (as reflected through UAG).

However, in the course of the observed interactions metacognitive regulation (especially planning and checking) was not made transparent for the child by the mother. Actually, planning and checking were virtually absent as targets of the mother-child interaction. Planning of subsequent steps was explicitly addressed only by 4 % of the mothers, and 74 % of the dyads commenced solving the task without any, even hidden or implicit planning. While 40 % of them promptly started dealing with the very task, 34 % devoted some time to negotiating each other's roles but not to selecting appropriate strategies for dealing with the task they were confronted with. Checking was completely absent in 92 % of the dyads, and only 8 % of the mothers made some ending comments like "Well, let's see what we have done..."

In general, these tentative results regarding metacognitive control are leaving the impression of the development toward an independently thinking individual not being promoted. Indeed, it might be the care that presely planning and checking are the processes privileged for being in the control of authority of any kind. This way, metacognitive regulation remains non-transparent for the developing individual, and is virtually removed from its repertoire of activity. Whether this pattern of results lends itself to interpretation as reflecting a general cultural attitude toward children in this society (close and accepting relationship, but neither providing the necessary tools for independent individual functioning, nor requesting it) is certainly an empirical question for further investigations. But, if proved valid, this interactive pattern might be considered as a fundamental mechanism of constantly re-generating an authoritarian mode of thinking in society.

The Intervention Program

Relying on the theoretical reconceptualization of metacognition in the Vygotskian framework and on the results of the study presented, a metacognition fostering program has been developed (Kovac-Cerovic et al, 1993). This program, called "Cognition through Games", fulfills the need created by the Yugoslav schooling system disregarding all three facets of metacognitive development (experiential, regulative and reflective) and it can be considered as an intervention program aiming to alter the perpetuation of an authoritarian thinking mode in the Yugoslav society, described above.

The two most important features of the program are anchored in the theory: using social interaction as the major vehicle for constructing metacognitive development and relying on metacognitive experiences as the starting point for fostering metacognition. We consider both features to be necessary in order to circumvent possible obstacles of metacognitive training programs which arise from the fact that metacognition is subtle and hidden, easily misled by inappropriate contexts, and the training easily faked if not built upon authentic experiences of the children. Also, the choice of these features of the program is based on the analysis of the cultural specificity of metacognitive development in Yugoslavia: it relies on the children's' experiences as the best mothers in the above described study do, but builds the regulative mechanisms more thoroughly and elaborately upon these experiences than the mothers do. The program consists of a series of 27 workshops (15 for grades 1-4 and 12 for grades 5-8). The workshops are organized around diverse cognitive and social problems/topics which bear educational relevance in their own rights as well, but also a require high level of metacognitive activity from the participants. The uniting feature of all the workshops is the process embedded in their design and developed relying on basic notions of the theory of Vygotsky, specifically the constructive role of social interaction in the Zone of Proximal Development. In order to enhance metacognitive experience we provided possibilities for:

1. provoking the experience
   - the curriculum must be organized around real problems
2. making the experience meaningful
   - careful arrangement of context is essential
3. accepting the experience
   - teacher intervention and modeling is necessary
4. sharing the experience
   - group interaction is essential
5. promoting the experience
   - focusing on the Zone of Proximal Development of each child should be accomplished through group interaction, teacher intervention and meaningful problems

The steps in our workshop process encompass all these requirements.

All activities are structured into game-like cooperative group activities. The game-context is carefully designed in order to render children's activities authentic and meaningful and to provide opportunities for metacognitive experiences to occur. In the course of the workshops, these experiences are further framed and articulated by symbolic tools, i.e. expressed through movement, picture or word. In the next step, experiences are shared in group interaction and thus legitimized through acceptance by the group. Finally, the game structure calls for further elaboration - experiences are used to build up coping strategies regarding more elaborate and thorough metacognitive regulation, which are further generalized and reflected upon.

The program "Cognition through Games" has been used with refugee children through an UNHCR project, as well as in many after-school settings with elementary school children in Yugoslavia. Also, we consider this program potentially useful in many other societies where individual responsibility and independent thinking were not sufficiently fostered in the past.

Conclusion

The study described in this article dealt with the metacognitively stimulative aspects of mother-child interaction, based on a Vygotskian reconsideration of metacognition and its development.

It was shown that theoretically relevant but empirically novel aspects of interaction can be detected in the realm of mother-child interaction - specifically, dealing with metacognitive experiences, meaning making, language of thinking. Also, a tentative cultural pattern of interaction has been recognized, fostering close mother-child relationships but, neglecting metacognition, which, coupled with the impact of schooling, might be potentially detrimental for independent metacognitive functioning.

A metacognition fostering program derived from this study was outlined and its reliance on the theory of Vygotsky highlighted.

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PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT AND EDUCATION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD: THE CASE OF FINLAND

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I will start this paper with a fictive example:

> The children's playground in Alexander Street is everything one can expect from a playground. The only negative aspect is that there is a busy street next to it and the area is fenceless. So the children can easily run into the street.
>
> Lisa is in the playground with her mother and brother. She is a lively child and she loves ball games. Her plans for today is to play ball games, but before Lisa can go her mother asks her if she remembers that the street is dangerous and it is forbidden to go there while playing. Lisa nods and asks if she may go now, her friends are waiting for her. She joins the other children and they start playing.
>
> After a while Lisa's mother notices that she is running after the ball straight towards the street. Mother rushes after her and luckily catches her just in time. The mother is very upset. She pulls Lisa's hair and shouts angrily that she has warned Lisa at least thousands of times about the street and that it is forbidden to run there. Lisa starts to cry.

In my example the child is saved, but what we are - or at least I am - more interested in, is the subsequent situation between Lisa and her mother. Did the mother act correctly when she pulled her daughter's hair? She used only light physical punishment. If someone asks that question from Lisa's mother or someone else's parent, the answer might be something like this: "I did what I had to do. I got scared and since we had talked about that street so many times Lisa ought to know that it is forbidden to go even near the street. I also think there are situations like this when you have to punish the child, pull her hair, for example, so that the next time she will remember."

Certain experts in education might answer otherwise by claiming that the mother's solution was not right because children's corporal punishment is not allowed. It can cause a trauma for the child or he/she might learn a violent way of solving problems. If the expert is from Finland, she or he might also say that the mother behaved wrongly because according to Finnish law corporal punishment is prohibited, even if such punishment were used for an educational motive or reason. Later in this paper corporal punishment will refer to inflicting bodily pain as a response in an educational situation (see also Clark - Freeman Clark 1989, 43-44).

In Finland the provision - from the 19th century - which stated that the parent's obligation was to punish physically a child under 15 years who had committed a crime was removed in 1970, after the reform of chapter 21 in the Finnish Penal Code (1969). Before this reform, what came to crimes done against one's life and health, the Code prescribed that child abuse (assault) in some cases, such as corporal punishment for an educational purpose, for example, was not a penal offence. In the preparatory material related to the reform (Government Bill 68/1966) it can still be read that in case of minor (petty) assault or punishment (corporal) one can avoid legal consequences. This provision concerning parents' rights to interfere with the child's bodily integrity for an educational reason was removed from the Penal Code as unnecessary since the parents' "parental power" was seen prevailing without any specific reference to it. (Nikula 1984, 24; Nieminen 1990, 108.)

This was clearly changed in 1984 in the Child Custody and Right of Access Act (1983 abbrev. Child Custody Act). According to the Act, corporal punishment is illegal: A child is to be brought up in the spirit of understanding, security, and love. The child must not be subdued, corporal punished or otherwise humiliated. The child's growth towards independence, responsibility, and maturity is to be encouraged, supported, and assisted.

By this provision the legislator seeks to point out that also children have the right to bodily integrity like adults and the right to have protection even against their parents. For centuries the father was "the master of the house" (patriarchal family system), but more recently both parents have used their "parental power" including the right to give orders to children, demand obedience from them and use corporal punishment when it seems to be necessary (see Mahkonen 1978, 41-82; Pollock 1983, 151, 154-156, 161-162, 172-173, 184-185; Nieminen 1990, 25; Pylkkänen 1992, 98-110).

The tradition of corporal punishment is old; therefore it is difficult for some of us to understand that it is seen as an assault and that it is illegal. In some families corporal punishment is still a part of their educational reality. In the process of enhancing children's rights the international conventions have had a certain impact on national legislation. This is true also in the case of Finland. In this context one must mention especially the Geneva Declaration (1924), the Declaration of the Right of the Child (1959) and the more recent Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989).

In 1993 the Finnish Supreme Court has judged (case 151:1993) that physical punishments, such as pulling children's hair, for example, are against the law even if they are used with an educational intent. In one example case the stepfather repeatedly used corporal punishment to get his 5-year-old stepdaughter to 'behave correctly'. The Supreme Court punished the stepfather with a fine for petty assaulting (battering) according to the

Penal Code (1889 chap 21 art 7) and the Child Custody Act (1983 art 1.3). Before the Finnish Supreme Court's decision and despite the provision which forbade corporal punishment people considered it as a parents' right according to opinions expressed, for example, in the leading notional newspaper Helsingin Sanomat, in 1978 and in 1993. At this stage it is impossible to say if the peoples' opinions and attitudes towards corporal punishment are going to change in the future.

Some Finnish scholars have claimed that corporal punishment and child assaulting are different aspects of the same phenomenon (Ruoppila 1979, 277; Peltoniemi 1984, 18-25, 113; Sariola 1990). According to Korpilahti (1981, 53-54) most child assaults started with corporal punishment and according to Peltoniemi (1984, 18-25) corporal punishment is one form of family violence. So, corporal punishment, even used for an educational motive, is in some interpretations violence/ assault/ battery/ child abuse. This is not a surprise considering the fact that some of the very same scholars have - in many cases - taken part in the legislative process of Child Custody Act and Child Welfare Act. The latter Act sets an obligation on public authorities to breach autonomy of the family and intervene if the conditions in the home and the custody of the child are not in conformity with the best interests of the child. Under these kind of circumstances the child has a right to protection.

As one can notice, children's corporal punishment is related to less severe violence. In the Finnish Penal Code (1889 arts 5-7) three different levels in assaulting have been defined: 1) aggravated, 2) ordinary and 3) petty. According to the Penal Code assaulting a child under 15 years of age is subject to official prosecution and the obligation of the police is to investigate the case and the prosecutor has to bring a charge against the assaulter, even if it is the child's parent (see also Nikula 1984, 25; Nieminen 1990, 108; Räty 1992, 30).

The above demonstrates the starting point of my study. There is a conflict: children's physical punishment is forbidden clearly by Child Custody Act in Finland, but there are people who use physical punishment in spite of this provision. Children's physical punishment is also forbidden in the Nordic legal systems of Sweden (1979) and Norway (1972). It is interesting to notice that in these countries the Acts whose function is to protect children (Child Welfare Act), were enacted in Sweden in 1902, in Norway in 1896 (put into effect in 1900), and in Finland in 1936 after almost 40 years' efforts. The first initiative to the Child Welfare Act in Finland was taken already in 1897, by an assembly of the representatives of the parliament, when Finland was still under the rule of Russia. Finland's declaration of independence was given on December 6, 1917. (Government Bill 93/1934; Pulma & Turpeinen 1987, 106.)

The findings of previous Finnish research

The findings of some studies show that parents use corporal punishment. According to the Finnish Gallup research (1978), 69 % of the surveyed people (475) told that their parents had used corporal punishment (Vuoristo 1979, 16). The latest and the most comprehensive research (Sariola 1990), conducted with the aid of an anonymous questionnaire given to 9th graders, pupils aged 15-16, shows that before the age of 14 72 % of them (7 349 pupils) told that their parents had used some sort of physical punishment including slapping, pulling hair, shaking, birching and beating up. This data was collected during 1987-1988 in 409 classes from comprehensive schools (88,8 % responded), and the sample is representative of the whole country.

Why do adults use corporal punishment? According to Sariola's research, children thought that the reason was mostly because of their own behavior (46 %) and educational reasons (36 %). Other causes such as the parent's personality, parent's stress, abuse of alcohol, a will to show their power, hate for the child and quarrels were also mentioned. Those who had no experience about corporal punishment thought that it was due to adults' behavior (see also Miller 1985; Dyer 1986) and those who had experience of corporal punishment thought that there was an educational motive. (Sariola 1990, 57-61.)

One previous research from 1978 showed that 4 % of the people surveyed considered corporal punishment a generally approved method in education, 40 % approved of it in exceptional cases and 55 % considered that one should handle educational situations with other methods (Vuoristo 1979, 16). The findings of a research done in 1981 (530 people were interviewed) showed that 47 % considered that there is a need for corporal punishment in exceptional situations, 44 % did not approve of corporal punishment and 9 % did not know what to say (Peltoniemi 1981, 651). According to the latest research (1990), 45 % of the children surveyed considered corporal punishment necessary and 55 % did not approve of it (Sariola 1990, 61). These studies show that the tendency towards corporal punishment has not changed very much.

Table 1. How did people consider corporal punishment in education?

Year (data collected)	Approved	Disapproved
1978	40 %	55 %
1981	47 %	44 %
1988	45 %	55 %

The latest research (1990) also brings into daylight the fact that those who had experiences of violence are probably going to use corporal punishment in the future as a parent, at least more than those who had no experience of violence. Similar conclusions have been made in other studies (Vuoristo

1979; Straus & Gelles & Steinmetz 1980; Hirsjärvi 1981). In Sariola's research pupils who had *much* experience of severe violence were an exception, they were expected to use less corporal punishment in the future as a parent than those who had *some* experiences of severe violence. 77 % of the pupils told that they were not going to use corporal punishment in the future and 5 % told that they probably or certainly were going to use corporal punishment in bringing up their own children. (Sariola 1990, 61-62, 66-67.)

Although corporal punishments are related with the home background, one study (Kangas 1990) showed that even in kindergartens physical punishments are not unknown. The study was conducted with the aid of 100 anonymous questionnaires given to day care center (kindergarten) personnel responsible for education in 10 kindergartens in Helsinki (61 % responded). The data was collected during late 1989 and the sample is not representative of the whole country, but it does give some sort of an indication about the whole country's situation.

Kangas asked mostly yes/no-questions in three different levels: 1) Have you **heard** that some kindergarten staff member has, for example, pulled a child's hair? (rumours, what kind of "stories" circulate in kindergarten) 2) Have you **seen** that some kindergarten staff member has pulled a child's hair? (eye-witness, have they seen some prohibited educational methods or strong measures used) and finally 3) **Have you** pulled a child's hair in an educational situation? (confess, I have used some prohibited educational methods).

Table 2. Have you heard, seen or used physical punishment in kindergarten? (source Kangas 1990, 15-18.)

Act	Rumour	Eye-witness	Confession
Pulling hair	47.5 %	20.6 %	13.5 %
Corporal punishment	51.9 %	40.4 %	28.8 %
Slapping	18.6 %	6.8 %	1.7 %

Educators (31.5 %) in kindergarten admitted that they had used strong (forcible) measures when they were tired. 79.1 % told that they have had to use strong measures to protect a child from his/her own violent reactions and 87 % told that they have had to use strong measures to protect other children from the violent one. The study did not show that the most commonly used educational methods in kindergarten are the prohibited ones, but it showed that the kindergarten cannot be considered a "free zone" concerning educational problems, (Kangas 1990, 19, 27) which hardly is surprising.

One has to bear in mind that not all used educational methods are prohibited ones. Discipline, correction and admonitions as well as positive measures are part of ordinary life and education, but on the other hand it is also forbidden in kindergartens to treat children submissively, in a discriminatory way or abuse them mentally (see Child Custody Act). Children have to learn their limits, learn how to behave (self-discipline and responsibility) and due to that they need both rules and guidance. (See Caplan 1980; Dyer 1986; Kangas 1990; Furman 1993.)

Outline of research

In my study I intent to view physical punishment as an educational issue. Children's physical punishment is a significant social phenomenon because it is related with education and many have experiences about it. Children's corporal punishment is also a subject which from time to time captures the public's indignation and attention just like all other forms of child abuse. In Finland, after the Supreme Court's decision (case 151:1993), the time is right for public discussion about corporal punishment. Although my starting point is in everyday life, my research object is the "right" and "true" knowledge concerning physical punishment. How has it developed? Why is children's physical punishment permitted or forbidden?

In everyday life one can find two opposite concepts; the "right" prevailing "scientific" interpretation which thinks that physical punishment is totally wrong and there is nothing good in it and "everyday knowledge" which thinks that there are situations that require physical punishment. These two opposite concepts show that physical punishment is seen either as good or bad. Behind the concept of physical punishment one can find two contradictory basic concepts about the child; the child is also seen as good or bad. This notion leads at least into two different ideas about child: Christian and "Modernistic" or Psychological.

The Christian concept of child (man) is based on the original sin doctrine, which means that because of Eva's choice in the paradise, the child has an inborn inclination for bad. In the modernistic or psychological concept the child is seen as an active person and more as a slave of his/her desires and instincts than an evil or a bad person. (See Sunley 1974, 163; Hirsjärvi 1981; 39-40; 1982, 63-64, 95-131; Tähtinen 1992, 40-41; Häggman 1994, 141-143.)

The intention of my study is to trace the Finnish discourse on physical punishment primarily by means of studying text. So the research material is text, discourse. The statements concerning the physical punishment of children are in the focus. The way I see it, studying literature and texts - history - gives you an idea of the past knowledge from which today's concepts of punishment are derived. The French intellectual Michel Foucault (1926-1984), for example, argues that discourses are never independent of history and power (Cherryholmes 1988, 38). According to Foucault (1985, 7) the truth is a research object: the truth in its positiveness, as something that can and must be thought about and "power is 'always already there', that one is never 'outside' it..." (Foucault 1980a, 141).

As I mentioned before, the intention is to trace the thinking process concerning physical punishment in education by taking a look at three different keypoints or aspects. These keypoints are 1) four Finnish school-pedagogues' texts as a pedagogical authoritative expert talk, 2) legal regulation concerning children's rights and bodily integrity as a states official standpoint and 3) opinions expressed in the newspaper as a public civil discussion.

First keypoint: My hypothesis is that first of all the authoritative school-pedagogues with their texts have been essential for the direction and formation of the Finnish discourse of physical punishment. For that reason I have chosen one wide text (book) from four Finnish school-pedagogues - or one might call them educational thinkers or experts - from the 18th to the 20th century. Those are H.G. Porthan (1739-1804), U. Cygnaeus (1810-1888), A. Salo (1887-1951) and M. Koskenniemi (1908-). Porthan was the first in Finland to hold lectures on pedagogics (1783) and Cygnaeus made important proposals about the elementary school (1861). Salo distinguished himself by writing books about didactics and according to Päivänsalo he created a new theory on education and Koskenniemi brought up new didactics in teacher education. (Päivänsalo 1971, 34-36, 38, 65, 153, 204-205, 228, 272, 322.)

The chosen books are: Porthan's Curriculum for tutors concerning their duties and intelligent action (Utkast til Undervisining för Informatorer, rörande deras kloka förhållande 1889), Cygnaeus: Uno Cygnaeus's Writings about founding and organizing Finnish elementary school (Uno Cygnaeuksen Kirjoitukset Suomen kansakoulun perustamisesta ja järjestämisestä 1910), Salo: Introduction to general pedagogy (Johdatus yleiseen kasvatusoppiin 1952) and Koskenniemi: Elementary-school didactics (Kansakoulun opetusoppi 1946). One has to notice that these books are available only in their original languages (titles translated by the author).

Second keypoint: Today's legal situation is such that the states official standpoint to children's physical punishment is negative. I will also study the development of the legal regulation of corporal punishment starting from the 18th century. This legal material represents a very special point of view, it determines how one ought to think about physical punishment: in other words, what is "true" knowledge. The sample consists of two Acts from the 18th century, three Acts from the 19th century, two Acts from the 20th century and Government Bills concerning children's corporal punishment and protection.

The third keypoint is closer to the contemporary scene and the main object of the study is the opinion page in Finland's biggest newspaper, Helsingin Sanomat, and in it two specific debates on children's physical punishment. These debates are from 1978 and 1993. The sample consists of 37 opinions from ordinary parents and professional people who are interested in children's well-being.

This is done in order to reconstruct how the "right" and "true" knowledge concerning physical punishment has been developed; by what authorization can the prevailing concept claim to have special insight into the truth? The focus is on "truths" which constitute the discourse on corporal punishment. As Simola (1995) stated in his own study concerning the Finnish school teacher in educational state discourse: "These truths are basic and often self-evident elements of discourse, well known and accepted but rarely consciously articulated or identified conventions of the authoritative expert talk that classifies and determines what is "true" knowledge, "right" power and "good" teacher in the discursive field of schooling."

As far as I am concerned the above also applies to corporal punishment. Discourse on corporal punishment determines and classifies the "true" knowledge, "right" power and "good" educator in the discursive field of education, and at the same time when "discourse makes it possible to construct the topic in a certain way it also limits the other ways in which the topic can be constructed" as Hall puts it (1992, 291). Discourse is constructed in practice and it is enacted in a "discursive practice" which means "a body of anonymous, historical rules, always determined in the time and space that have defined a given period, and for a given social, economical, geographical, or linguistic area, the conditions of operation of the enunciative function" (Foucault 1982, 117). Discursive practice determines what, who, how and in which legitimation one can say something and expect to be taken seriously.

The research material is text and the research belongs to the qualitative research tradition. The explicit method or way of approaching the subject is influenced by Michel Foucault's archaeological method (see Foucault 1980b; 1982). Here you have to bear in mind that we are not talking about a simple step-by-step method, however, you can be influenced (methodologically) by Foucault. In a restricted manner of speaking the study is "Foucaultian". Foucault "tries to account for how texts came to be what they are, not explain or interpret them or say what they really meant" (Cherryholmes 1988, 33).

Following my own study (Husa 1995) of Foucault I have selected five crucial points from his archaeology of knowledge method 1) An openly critical starting point 2) A pursuit to challenge the prevailing truth 3) Understanding the text as an autonomical discourse 4) Historical perspective in a "deconstructive" rather than a reconstructive mind and 5) Selecting sensitive issues as objects of study. To be a bit more concrete one could argue that the Foucaultian way of analyzing discourse is not that different from a typical text analysis. This means that one can borrow methodological tools from traditional text analysis.

What's the function of this kind of a study?

The intention is NOT to show by the means of a scientific research how you should or ought to think about children's physical punishment. Corporal punishment is stigmatized in Finland and it is strictly forbidden even if one had educational motives. Despite the provision there are parents who use corporal punishment. Because of this intellectual contradiction I think it is important to show that things could be otherwise; one could argue that I am trying to construct an alternative interpretation, not a sort of a "truth". "Truth" is not the only "truth", in most cases we can talk about different interpretations of socially constructed phenomena. This is why I think that one must study the discourse of corporal punishment and the most frequently used pro and contra arguments. The aim of the study is to find textual traces to a deeper understanding of modern discussion on corporal punishment.

The purpose of the study is also to bring into daylight the sort of truthlike knowledge that we unconsciously are aware of but which has already once been forgotten and that has been buried under structures of human knowledge. In other words I am trying to show that our basis of knowledge - concerning corporal punishment - has its foundations in the unconscious social conventions, which means that our knowledge is not actually truthlike but more or less contractual in manner. The academic goal and intention is to bring forward the sort of a hidden structure of knowledge about corporal punishment which makes it possible to reflect on the subject critically. One ought to choose the basic values consciously or some values will effect on one's activities unconsciously.

The study has got started reasonably well but there are no final results to present yet. At this point I have read the texts by the school-pedagogues and made a preliminary study of the legal material concerning the subject. While processing the textual material one can find the conception that it is acceptable to use corporal punishment in early childhood after the more "noble means" themselves have been proved to be ineffective. In the texts one can also find mentions that corporal punishment can have a harmful influence on the child. But one can avoid this so that the parent (usually father) is the one who punishes the child. It is the loving relationship between the child and the parent that makes it less harmful to the child. The whole idea is that with minor pain you can avoid the bigger evil. Only small children will be punished corporal because it has no effect on bigger children over 10 years of age. The Finnish legal system, however, does not recognize such a "natural" opportunity to use corporal punishment.

Behind the school-pedagogues' texts one can find the influence of those two concepts of man which have already been mentioned earlier: the Christian, in which the child is seen as bad from the day he is born, and the Modernistic or the Psychological concept, in which the child is seen influenced by the environment and also as a genetic person. What else there is to be found from the other keypoints of my study is still an open question at this stage.

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Children's Health and Wellbeing in Education Context

SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN: SICK CHILDREN - A CHALLENGE FOR CHILD CARE

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Introduction

The provision of services for special needs children is a growing concern in many Western nations. Many challenges are confronted by the providers of special needs services for young children and their families. One group requiring care is the chronically disabled which include the physically, emotionally and mentally challenged. A second group who frequently require specialized services is the chronically ill. The chronically ill include those with specific conditions such as diabetes and asthma. Many of these children require medications and/or the carrying out of manual activities or procedures. However a third group contains nearly all families who have children in child care. Since in the normal course of events, most children at one time or another become ill forcing their families to deal with the issues of lost work, seeking alternative arrangements, or requesting provision of service from child care providers.

When a child becomes ill, employed parents face the dilemma of providing care for the child and possibly losing work to provide care. The United States National Child Care Survey (1990) indicated that 35 % of mothers employed outside the home reported that one of their children was ill in the past month. Over half of those mothers stayed home to provide care. Of those who did go to work when their children were sick, 21 % reported that their partners stayed home, over a third left the child with relatives, almost a quarter used their regular care, 6 % used self-care, 4 % took the child with them to work and 10 % used other arrangements. It is sometimes reported that regulated family day care providers are more likely than centre-based programs to accept sick children. About 25 % will permit parents to leave children with severe coughs, 20 % accept children who appear feverish, and 10 % permit children with rashes.

In France, Collet et al. (1994) studied the risk of infectious diseases in children attending different types of day-care settings and the incidence of recurrent infections in children attending family day care, small (10-20 children) day-care centers (DCCs), and large (> or = 40 children) DCCs. Compared to those in family day-care, children attending small DCCs presented a higher risk for infectious episodes. The risk for children attending large DCCs was intermediate between the family day care and the small DCCs. This study reports the incidence rate of disease in various forms of child care without investigating the criteria or the process of exclusion for ill children.

The purpose of this paper is to develop a model of the factors influencing family day care providers' acceptance of acutely ill children into care. This paper extends the work of Thompson (1993) who described the process that employed mothers used to make decisions about sick children. Thompson based her analysis on interviews with employed mothers concerning the difficulties they experienced in making decisions about the care of sick children. The present model is partially derived from a research base of studies conducted with E. Polyzoi and summarized below. The first study (Polyzoi & Kerr, 1993) identified concerns of trained and untrained family care day providers. The second one (Kerr & Polyzoi, 1995) ascertained the importance of dealing with sick children for family day care providers and the constellations of other concerns that are relevant to these providers.

Research base

The Family Day Care Association of one Canadian Province distributed a questionnaire to its membership of 385 licensed family day care providers. These members come urban and rural communities and provide neighbourhood service to primarily low income, subsidized families. Two hundred and thirty (60%) providers returned the survey. This survey requested information concerning the role of licensing, training, years in the field, subsidization, professionalism, and daily functioning in the family day care home.

Respondents were asked to rate items of concern for them as family day care providers. The items were rated 1 (not important) to 5 (very important). Further analyses of this information revealed two principal factors. The major factor was "concern for sick children". The second factor was "the mechanics of operating a business" which included items about delays of payment from the government and delays in the application process. The first factor contributed 22.9 % of the variance and the second contributed 9.6 %. The factor scores for the two primary factors were computed for each of the family day care providers. An ANOVA was performed on these factor scores based on the level of formal training received by the provider. Figure 1 shows a the differences on Factor 1, concern for sick children, based on the training level of the provider. Those individuals with little or no training were more concerned about their capacity to care for sick children than were those who had received at least community college training.

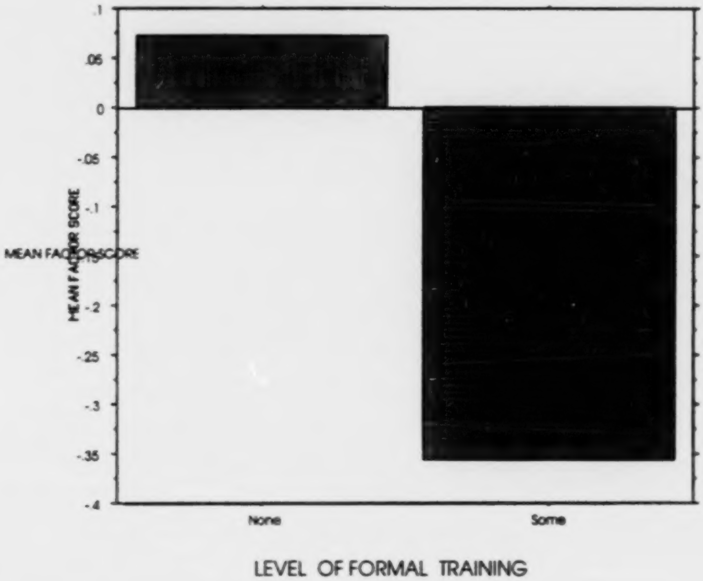

Figure 1. Mean score on concern for sick children for providers with no or some formal training.

The providers were classified on their level of concern for sick children based on their factor score. A series of comparisons were made among the providers categorized as high (N = 47), medium (N = 103), and low (N = 46). Table 1 shows the differences between the high, medium and low concerned. From this it can be seen that specific factors may influence the family day care providers' willingness to include ill children within their care.

Table 1. Means and standard deviations of issues for providers based on factor score.

LEVEL OF CONCERN OVER FAMILIES WITH ILL CHILDREN

	High		Medium		Low	
Concerns and issues	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
1. Families who bring sick children to care[a,b,c]	4.79	.41	3.50	1.01	1.29	.6***
2. Delays in receiving payment for services	3.38	1.63	2.80	1.56	2.80	1.65
3. The amount of money I earn for the work[a]	3.43	1.25	3.07	1.34	2.84	1.40*
4. The long hours of work	3.34	1.19	3.06	1.27	2.84	1.45
5. The wear and tear on my home	3.04	1.44	3.00	1.16	2.38	1.35
6. Stress if the job[a]	3.38	1.19	2.89	1.11	2.76	1.38*
7. Delays in subsidy approval	2.81	1.67	2.98	1.46	2.80	1.60
8. Feeling tired, overworked, under-appreciated	2.94	1.37	2.85	1.23	2.84	1.51
9. Isolation in working without adults	2.66	1.34	2.67	1.32	2.84	1.52
10. Dealing with difficult behavior[a]	2.88	1.22	2.53	1.06	2.24	1.25**
11. Talking to parents about problems	2.64	1.34	2.43	1.17	2.27	1.18
12. The clutter in my home	2.49	1.38	2.59	1.27	2.33	1.26
13. Finding clients	2.11	1.41	2.60	1.45	2.38	1.35
14. Keeping records and doing taxes	2.57	1.22	2.61	1.42	2.42	1.42
15. Budgeting my money[a,c]	2.81	1.35	2.40	1.40	1.84	1.15***
16. Coming up with ideas for games etc.[b]	1.77	1.11	2.11	1.19	2.22	1.22*
17. Talking with clients about contracts	2.27	1.15	2.20	1.21	1.96	1.22
18. Understanding the subsidy system	1.96	1.25	2.24	1.23	1.84	1.24
19. Understanding children's behavior[a]	2.40	1.74	1.99	.99	1.69	.79*
20. Doing things required for licensing	2.01	1.20	2.10	1.17	1.96	1.24
21. Dealing with government staff	1.86	1.12	1.70	.99	1.91	1.49

Note.
1. The items are ordered from the most to the least item of concern for the total group. The item of greatest concern was over families who bring sick children.
2. n=47 high concern group, n=104 medium group, n=45 low group
3. [a]=difference between high and low group; [b]=difference between high and medium group; [c]=difference between low and medium
4. * p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001

The high group had worked in day care an average of 7.70 years, the medium group an average of 6.03 years, and the low group an average of 9.14 years. However, the major difference among these family day care providers was in the number of years they had worked prior to being licensed because the low group had more years of prior experience than the medium group.

Those providers who were the most concerned about sick children also differed from other providers in the identification of other important behaviors as assessed by the questionnaire. Such differences included being more concerned about understanding children, dealing with difficult children and developing curriculum. As well, they rated stress and financial worries highly. Therefore, these providers demonstrated a picture of stress characterized by dismay over the difficulties of dealing with sick and well children, and over budgetary issues.

In summary, the research of E. Polyzoi and myself on family day care providers implies that:

1. The overall training of family day care providers may impact on their level of concern for sick children and their families. Those individuals with little formal education in child care are more concerned than those with approximately two years of child care education about their capability to handle ill children.

2. Those providers who are very concerned about dealing with sick children and their families indicate problems in understanding children in general, in handling sick and well children who are difficult, and in planning activities and curriculum.

3. The stress level of those providers who are very concerned about dealing with sick children and their families may be influenced by the dilemmas imposed by concern over the complexities of providing care for well and ill children, the possible loss of income if they do not accept sick children, and the probable contagion effect of having sick children around other children, themselves and/or their own families.

The challenge of providing for sick children and their families is based not only on the process of parental decision-making as shown by Thompson (1993), but also on the decision-making of the providers. From a societal and family perspective, the early childhood provider's willingness to accept ill children into care impacts on the financial and emotional well-being of the total family. Therefore, it is important to consider the issues that may influence such willingness. The proposed model includes many important forces on the provider during the decision making about incorporating a sick child within a family day care home is shown in Figure 2.

Provider's decisions about caring for sick children

The model is composed of six forces in the lives of providers. These six forces are providers' education and training, their competence in illness recognition, the provider's vulnerability to pressure, the home and environment, the commitment to professional responsibility and the social-cultural context that enhances or facilitates the general care of young children.

INFLUENCING FACTORS

Provider's Education and Training

- Ability to understand children
- Competence with sick children
- Capability to establish curriculum and activities
- Proficiency with difficult children

Provider's Recognition of Illness

- Alertness to presence of child's symptoms
- Awareness of characteristics of illness
- Knowledge of infection diseases and implications
- Availability of health and child care consultants

Provider's Susceptibility to Pressure

- Lack of alternate care arrangements for family
- Budgetary and financial impact of excluding ill children
- Liability for poor outcomes, e.g. medication side-effects
- Personal and professional relationship with parent

Provider's Home and Family

- Areas to provide isolation for ill child
- Vulnerability of provider's family to illness
- Vulnerability of provider to illness
- Economic consequences to family income

Professional Responsibility

- Maintenance and adherence to licensing
- Communication with other families in care
- Development of contracts of service

Societal and Cultural Context

- Provision of parental leave for care of ill
- Provision of alternative facilities
- View of the nature and course of illness

Figure 2. Provider's decisions about caring for sick children.

Education and Training

The individual caregiver who has training in understanding the emotional, social and growth requirements of young children is more able to competently handle children with diverse needs and conditions. Those children who are ill, in fact, may respond in fashions that are not consistent with their usual patterns of behavior. Therefore, the caregiver who has knowledge of individual differences as well as children's behavioral variability in different situations would more readily be expected to accommodate to a range of behaviors from children in general. Some of these children such as those with special needs may require more guidance and structuring of activities. The capability of providers to establish a curriculum with such diverse activities would be enhanced by advanced education and training. Through experience and appropriate supervision, providers also gain increasing skill in handling difficult situations and children in difficult circumstances.

Recognition of Illness

The sensitivity of providers to symptoms of diseases in young children may be gained through experience with children and through education. Since not all diseases are infectious or chronic, the providers require current information on childhood diseases and disorders. In many communities, there are regional hot-lines or visiting nursing who consult and provide support to child care providers giving them more confidence to make decisions about acceptance or rejection of children based on public health considerations.

Provider's Susceptibility to Pressure

This is a complex factor based on personal, interpersonal and economic levels. At a personal level, the differences in providers' personalities, e.g. anxiety level, desire to please etc. may increase or decrease the likelihood that they would react to pressures by parents to accept a child.

The interpersonal level involves the relationship between the provider and the parent. If the relationship is defined as one of business the decision-making process will be different than if the relationship is defined as one of friendship. Even when the relationship is perceived by both as a business relationship, the nature of the business relationship can alter the amount of pressure exerted on the provider. For example, if the parent and provider see the business as chiefly a service then pressure may be exerted on the caregiver to provide a service for a price.

The economic level is influenced by the providers' needs to have the income from the child's presence and by the providers' awareness of legal liability. Those providers who contract with parents so that payment is received even when children are ill is planning appropriately for contingencies. As well, providers who are concerned about their financial and legal liabilities when exposing other children to dangerous/threatening situations or when dispensing medicines to sick children may be cautious about accepting sick children and resist pressure.

Home and Family

The personal life situations of the caregivers will impact on the decision to accept ill children. If there is no physical space to isolate a sick child, providers may find it more difficult to incorporate ill children into the home without creating discomfort for the ill and/or other well children. In addition when an ill child is present in the home or center, there is an increased probability that the family of the caregivers or the caregivers themselves also may become ill. This then increases the likelihood that other consequences such as loss of work days or school days may occur.

Professional Responsibility

Early childhood educators who are members of professional associations are provided with ethical and professional standards that will guide their decision making. Through contact with professional groups, individual providers become increasingly knowledgeable of legislation within their communities. Often such legislation and government policies mandate when sick children should be accepted into care.

Part of the professional responsibility of early childhood educators is to inform the children's families of the occurrence of diseases among the children. This often is a sensitive issue when the scientific knowledge about a disease such as AIDS is being debated.

The development of service contracts between parents and child care providers enhances the professional relationship and clearly delineates the expectations of parent and provider including the charges and the basis on which decisions are made.

Societal and Cultural Context

The broader political and social environment also impacts on the decisions made by both parents and providers. Bronfennbrenner's model (1979) provides a theoretical base for this part of the model. In countries where there is a philosophical belief that parents should care for their children when in need, there may be employment provision including days off for the care of relatives contained in government legislation. Such legislation becomes part of the general social welfare contract. In other cases, days off may be seen as a work force issue that is resolved through management-employer negotiation.

Legislation in many jurisdictions mandates procedures for handling children with special needs and specifically for those with infectious diseases. Unfortunately these laws and policies are not always monitored and enforced since public accommodation for sick children is not always available.

Agencies, private enterprise and public sector groups may establish services for the care of the ill by having home or centers specifically designed for sick children. Often such alternatives are more viable in larger communities.

Finally the value systems of the families and of others in the community impact on what is believed to be the best care for sick children. These value systems generally influence how individuals believe they should act when they or others are ill. Do you prepare hot chicken soup? Do you read a story? Do you believe work is the only cure?

Conclusions

The care of sick children involves decision making by society, parents, and early childhood educators. The relevant considerations made by each requires analysis if appropriate care is to be provided for young children and their families. Information gained from family day care providers provides a base to assess the importance of this issue to them and the relationship of the concern for families with sick children to other aspects of child care.

The proposed model is developed so that practitioners, policy makers and researchers may focus on these forces and their multi-level impact. Also this paper guides child care providers through the forces that they may overlook in their daily decision making and assist them in informing the families and community.

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THE PLAY OF DISABLED CHILDREN IN EARLY DEVELOPMENT

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This article deals with one of the key aspects of early development: play. Studies concerning the development of play have been inspired by the work of Jean Piaget (1962). Piaget viewed the onset of symbolic play, together with language and deferred imitation, as simultaneous manifestations of underlying semiotic function. From this cognitive viewpoint, the ability to pretend expresses the emerging representative ability. Pretense has been examined also from the social, contextual standpoint (Bretherton et al., 1984). In this article play is examined in the cognitive framework.

Play has been used as a developmental indicator of the growing cognitive maturation of children. (Piaget, 1962; Lyytinen, 1989, 1990, 1991; Nieminen, 1991.) It has also been used as a therapeutic method for emotionally disturbed (Nader & Pynoos, 1991; Kajamaa, 1988; Koski, 1974), physically or mentally disabled children (Missiuna & Pollock, 1991; Thomasson, 1974; Wolfberg & Schuler, 1993; Brunberg, 1974).

This article deals with the play of children with motor handicap. The target group consists of children aged 0 to 3 years who regularly visit the department of Pediatric Neurology for assessment and rehabilitation. The children have been diagnosed as having brain damage due to prenatal difficulties and various complications in pregnancy or delivery, which have caused motor handicap and possibly some other disabilities. Preliminary results are presented concerning the mental status, recovery of motor function and level of symbolic play of some disabled children.

The role of play in early development

Play is a central facilitating element of early development. As the child plays, he practises spontaneously cognitive, emotional and motor abilities. Developmental trends of play activity have been actively explored. (Piaget, 1962; Nieminen, 1991; Lyytinen, 1990, 1991; McCune-Nicolich & Fenson, 1984).

It has been shown that qualitative changes occur in the development of symbolization during the first three years of life. Sensorimotor undifferentiated exploration develops through appropriate toy play and presymbolic imitative actions towards the symbolic use of objects. (Rosenblatt, 1977; Piaget, 1962; Belsky & Most, 1981; Vondra & Belsky, 1991; Lyytinen, 1990, 1991; Nieminen, 1991.) The appropriate use of objects is based on the visuomotor, and, also, conceptual integration. In symbolic toy play, behavior is not only guided by immediate situational and perceptual constraints but also by meanings given to objects and to the situation. (Vygotsky, 1978.)

Normally developing children transfer from presymbolic to symbolic activity fluently and quickly. Profoundly mentally disabled children never enter the symbolic stage (Brunberg, 1974). The same is true of severely autistic children if no specific habilitative support is available (Wolfberg & Schuler, 1993). Other handicapped children often stay at the presymbolic levels for a longer time - months, even years - than nondisabled peers, before developing any symbolic abilities. (Westby, 1991.)

In various studies, the growing capacity of pretend actions have been characterized by three trends: decentration, decontextualization, and integration (Piaget, 1962; Fenson, 1984; Lyytinen, 1990, 1991; Bretherton et al., 1984; Belsky & Most, 1981). Decentration refers to the child's increasing ability to incorporate players other than himself into the activity. It implies the understanding that objects and agents around him are independent of the self. Decontextualization, in turn, signals the first steps of the child towards acquiries arbitrary symbol systems. It is reflected by object substitution and the invention of imaginary objects. Integration exemplifies the child's increasing ability to combine separate actions into coordinated action sequences.

These concepts especially describe pretend actions (Fenson, 1984). Fenson (1984) and Lyytinen (1991) have adapted the action-based pretence concepts to deal with linguistic expressions. Action and language categories co-vary (Lyytinen, 1991). Both modes are age-dependent and serve complementary roles in children from age 20 to 31 months (Fenson, 1984).

Symbolic play, based on images and object manipulation, generally evolves at the age of one to two and acquires its peak around the age of four. The transition to role games takes place at the age of two to three. (Helenius, 1993; Nieminen, 1991.) A Linearly increasing age trend is found in play behavior (Lyytinen, 1991). Individual variation in play actions is thus limited in normal development. However, for linguistic utterances no significant age trend could be shown in children from age 2 to 6 years (Lyytinen, 1991). Individual variation is, thus, bigger in pretend language than in pretend action.

Motor disability and play

The impact of disability on early development varies. Development is dependent on many factors, the most important of them being the type, location and degree of damage in the brain. Besides the direct effects, early lesions have secondary effects on subsequent development. These can be either compensatory or detrimental. (Korkman, 1988.) Infants with focal brain damage have a greater capacity for recovery of motor function than adults (Fujimoto et al., 1994). However, the plasticity of the developing brain is limited. The varied effects of motor handicap are related to individually developing mental, hearing, visual and social abilities. Inadequate physical, social, and functional environment can increase the severity of impairment (Tammela, 1994; Korpela, 1993; Carlson, 1986).

Motor impairment is often caused by cerebral palsy (Cp). Cerebral palsy is an umbrella term for a variety of congenital and early neurological disorders (Fujimoto et al., 1994; Tammela, 1994; Paloneva, 1994). The causes of Cp vary from prenatal infarction of periventricular white matter to hypoxia at birth, traumatic infections etc.. The impact of Cp can range from mild to severe in the degree to which the disability interferes with the child's ability to function independently. The types of Cp are diverse and classified according to clinical findings. (Iivanainen, 1994; Missiuna & Pollock, 1991; Paloneva, 1994; Tammela, 1994.) No direct relation can be found between mental capacity and degree of physical impairment in cerebral palsied children (Kirk & Gallagher, 1979).

Motor handicap is often accompanied by additional disabilities like abnormal oral-motor patterns, speech or visual disorders, hearing or sensory losses, mental retardation, or epilepsy. An average of 80 % of children with cerebral palsy have one or more additional handicap, most generally speech disorder. (Paloneva, 1994; Korpela, 1993; Tammela, 1994.) In this sense, motor handicap is also often a multimodal disability. (Cp-opas, 1983; Palsio, 1994; Pääkkönen, 1990; Simeonsson et al., 1982; Swanson et al., 1992.)

There has been little research work done concerning the play behavior of handicapped children. (Mindes, 1982; Westby, 1991; Missiuna & Pollock, 1991; Wolfberg & Schuler, 1993.) The results reveal similar findings. Handicapped children exhibit the same developmental play sequences as normal children, but development occurs more slowly and unevenly. There is greater variability in the skills present at any developmental level than normally. Skills that usually emerge together do so less frequently in handicapped children. (Westby, 1991.)

The level of play behavior does not always match the mental level in children with motor impairment. The amount of the discrepancy depends on the type and the severity of disability. A child with mild cerebral palsy may have poor hand function, limiting his or her ability to manipulate a toy as desired; a child with more severe impairment may be unable even to communicate his or her interest in a toy (Missiuna et al., 1991). These children tend to engage more frequently in isolated and toy-directed behaviors and less in social interactive and creative play. Increased dependence on others' guidance, a lack of assertiveness, and poorly developed social skills in unstructured situations are a few of the difficulties that may be experienced by disabled children. (Mindes, 1982; Bretherton, 1984; Paloneva, 1994; Missiuna & Pollock, 1991.)

Motor disability can slow down, or in severe cases prevent, favorable development of play behavior. Several secondary reasons, social and educational, may arise as a result of the primary handicap. Home-based rehabilitation and ADL-activities take time, and play activities might be replaced by them. In play activities parents and siblings, regardless of age, often arrange the frame and content of play for a disabled child. Play situations may become hierarchical and overprotective, as truly reciprocal interaction is missing. (Missiouri et al., 1991; Westby, 1991; Rosenblatt, 1977.)

Elicited play as a tool for promoting symbolization

The effects of modelling and guidance on the play of nondisabled children have been studied by several authors (Lyytinen, 1989; Nieminen, 1991; Bretherton et al., 1984; O'Connel et al., 1984; Fenson, 1984). Far less information is available concerning its effects on the play behavior of disabled children. However, elicited play is frequently used with severely disabled children, who have difficulties in participating actively in play, but who can see, hear and/or sense the play. The crucial issue is if the mere following of play activity positively affects the developing abilities of a disabled child, where overt manipulation of toys or imitation is missing?

Lyytinen (1989) studied the effects of modelling on the symbolic play in nondisabled 36-month-old children. She noticed that the effect of modelling was dependent on the base level of symbolic skills. After modelling the level of symbolic play was, on average, higher than before. The modeling activated both play activity and verbal utterances. Modelling was most beneficial for those children whose spontaneous play activity included very few symbolic elements.

O'Connell and Bretherton (1984) observed 20- and 28-month-olds in two play sessions with their mothers at home and in the laboratory. They found out that 20-month-olds demonstrated an increase in both exploratory and combinatorial play diversity when the mother was playing with the child, whereas 28-month-olds showed an increase only in their symbolic play repertoire when playing with their mothers. The mothers were active, but not very specific, teachers of their children, providing the child with wide-ranging guidance. Children selected and determined which of mother's suggestions were incorporated into the play activity and which were ignored. 20-month-olds used mostly the mothers' exploratory and combinatorial suggestions. 28-month-olds found the mothers' guidance in symbolic play most useful.

Nieminen (1991) had similar results in her two-year-long observation of 10 mother-child dyads. The transfer from mother-driven to child-driven play activity was evident at the age of 18 and 24 months and was accompanied by a change of dominance also in the linguistic domain.

Some interesting issues are, if the change from mother-driven to child-driven activity is necessary for the developing symbolic play skills of children? How does turn-taking happen between disabled children and their parents and therapists? Do hierarchical play situations, as experienced by disabled children, slow down or prevent this process, and if so, how detrimental are the consequences?

There is lack of adequate research concerning the effects of elicitation and promotion of play on motor handicapped children. Its effects have, however, been studied with another neurological dysfunction, autism. Wolfberg and Schuler (1993) demonstrated in their research concerning the play of three severely autistic children that it was possible to enhance the play activity to a symbolic level by means of an integrated play group method with periods of adult guidance.

Method

This study is a part of the larger research project "Early Intervention and Young Disabled Children". The project is being carried out longitudinally over three years (1994-1997) at the department of Pediatric Neurology, Tampere University Hospital. The aims of the project are to study the early development of disabled children, to develop assessment methods, early habilitation services, and co-operation between families and professionals. The project also has multidisciplinary goals. One of them is to develop a play diagnostic method for the clinical use of pediatric professionals. For this reason the research project is also called the Play Project.

Sample

The target group consists of 61 disabled children aged 0 to 7 years who regularly visit the department of Paediatric Neurology, Tampere University Hospital for assessment and intervention. The group was selected at random from the risk children born in 1987-1994 and who are under the care of the department of Paediatric Neurology. They were all born as risk children with varying aethiological background.

Table 1: The aethiological background of the Play project children (N=61).

Aethiology	fr
Periventricular haemorrage	9
Periventricular leucomalasia	20
Hypoxic-ischemic encephalopathy	7
Cerebral malformation	13
Other reasons (chromosomal anomalies, syndromes etc.)	12
	61

At the first evaluation the diagnoses were cerebral palsy (n=42), meningomyelocele (n=7) or delayed psychomotor development (n=12). The children's rehabilitation, mainly physiotherapy, was started during the first months of age. All children are under intensive pediatric and developmental surveillance. Developmental status is examined at least twice a year multiprofessionally, with formal tests, interviews with the parents and recording of the children's play behavior.

The sample is divided randomly according to the principles of clinical experiment into the experimental and control group. The experimental group consists of 22 children aged 0 to 3 years and the control group of 39 children aged 1 to 7 years. Intervention consists of inpatient play monitoring and interventions until 36 to 72 months of age.

Data collection

Two methods of collecting data were used: the formal tests, and the video-taping of play behavior in hospital.

Cognitive development was evaluated using standardized psychological tests (Bayley Scales of Infant Development, Griffith Mental Developmental Scales, WPPSI or WISC-R). Motor functioning was assessed using a gross motor development scale created for the Play project (Seppänen et al., 1995).

Play activities were videotaped using both unstructured free play sessions and structured play situations. In the unstructured play session, lasting for 15 minutes, the mother was playing freely with the child. In the structured play session one of the therapists played with the child for 15 minutes using the toys and the games chosen for this purpose. Both play sessions took place in the hospital. In the structured play session, promotion of play behavior was used systematically. Different levels of enhancement were used, which took into account the degree of disability of the child. Gross motor functioning was measured, besides the formal test, using observations from the video recordings.

The level of play activity was assessed from the videotapes using assessment schedules developed for this study. The method is based on the empirical work concerning the development of symbolic play among nondisabled children (Belsky & Most, 1981; Vondra & Belsky, 1991; Nieminen, 1991; Lyytinen, 1990, 1991). In addition to play level the spontaneous and assisted motor functioning, communication, linguistic expressions and interaction of mother-child dyads were assessed from the video recodings.

Results

Preliminary results are presented with respect to the relations between the play performance and developmental status of three children. In figures 1-3, examples are given of the development of the mental, motor and play functions of the children.

The first example (Figure 1) is a girl, suffering from meningomyelocele, whose development is presented between the age interval of 32 months to 40 months. During that time her developmental age has increased from 21 to 23 months. Her gross motor function is well developed. She can walk forward independently holding on with the arms.

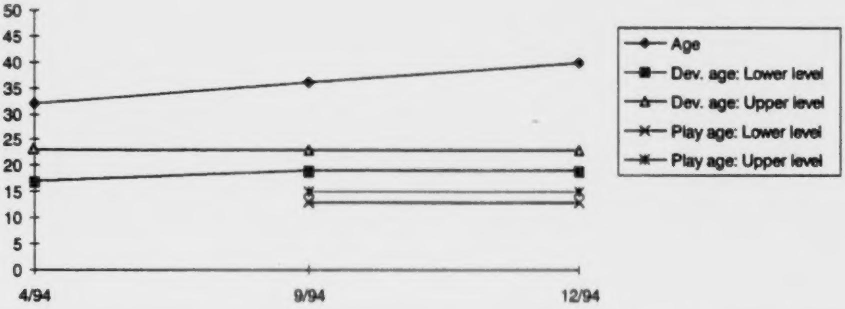

Figure 1. Mental state and cross-motor functioning of child with mental handicap.

Variation in her skills is approximately four months, her less developed abilities being speech and visuomotor integration. She suffers from hearing loss and wears hearing aids in both ears. Her play behavior is simple pretending. First steps in the dimension of decentration have been taken. The level of play matches well with her linguistic and conceptual stage.

The second example (Figure 2) is a boy, suffering from a spastic type of cerebral palsy, whose development presented here concerns the age interval from 23 to 35 months. His developmental age has increased from 14 months to 24 months. His play behavior has developed along the dimension of decentration. He can play simple pretending and manipulates toys adequately. The play behavior and cognitive abilities are enhanced by computer-aided games. The Computer is equipped with a touch-screen.

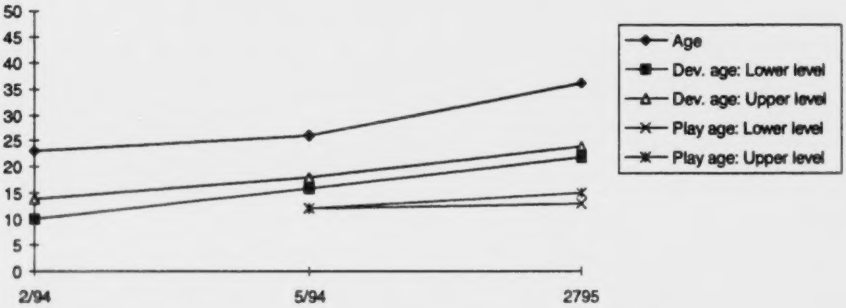

Figure 2. Mental state and cross-motor functioning of child with motor disability.

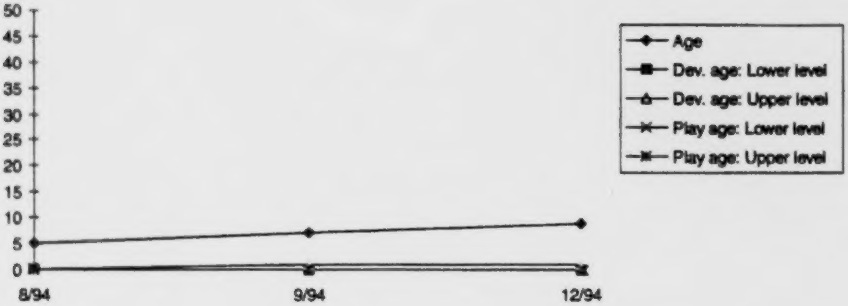

Figure 3: Mental state and cross-motor functioning of severely disabled child.

The third example (Figure 3) is a boy whose mental and motor functions are severely damaged due to periventricular leukomalacia. He is blind. The recording interval presented here consists of age 5 to 9 months. His developmental age increased during that time from 0 to 1 month. He can't move by himself. He has no grasping movement at all. The tactile sensitivity in his upper limbs is deviant. He likes to be in interaction with other people. Basal stimulation exercises are used a lot. His hearing ability is so far unclear.

These children were examples of the 22 children in the experimental group of the Play project. Their play development will be followed intensively during the coming years.

The individual variation among the disabled children is extensive. Also the variability in the skills present at any developmental level is remarkable. Usually the less developed cognitive skills are visuomotor integration and visuospatial skills. However, the developmental profile is dependent on the type and severity of the disability and additional disorders.

Most of the Play project children are progressing in their play activities and in mental as well as in motor functioning. There are, however, seven children in the experimental group who show very little progress in play activities - they are severely mentally disabled and have severe motor handicap. The level of these children's mental development as assessed by the observation of their child's play activities was lower than the developmental age measured by the psychological tests. The capacity of the child's gross motor functioning affects play development: the better the gross motor functioning the higher the level of play.

Conclusions

There are great individual differences in the play activities of disabled children. Children with mental disability or retardation develop play activities much more slowly than children with cerebral palsy. Preliminary results suggest that disabled children exhibit a similar pattern of developmental play sequence to that of nondisabled children (Lyytinen, 1991; Nieminen, 1991; Fenson, 1984). Decentered play acts were the first and most common forms of pretence. The theory and empirical data concerning the development of symbolic play gives a firm base for early psychological habilitation of young disabled children.

The preliminary results show the benefits of the play observation method in assessing the mental development of the disabled children. The play observation method has proven to be useful for professionals (psychologists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, nurses and speech-therapists) in evaluating the child's developmental level and functioning in a multidisciplinary team in co-operation with the parents. It has also been practical in planning the home-based ecologically valid habilitation together with parents and home rehabilitators.

The preliminary results presented in this article, concern the assessment of disabled children. In the Play project an effort is also being made to advance the habilitating practices for disabled children. The experimental group has received inpatient play interventions which will continue in the coming, until the children are 36 to 72 months of age. The theoretical basis for therapy through play has also been developed. Results concerning the effectiveness of the play interventions are, however, not yet ready. Development of habilitation methods using play as a tool for promoting the play behavior of handicapped children is the theoretically and empirically challenging next step of the Play project.

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AN EVALUATION OF HEALTH-PROMOTING SCHOOLS IN THE FINNISH NETWORK

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The Background of the Health Education Programme

The European Network of Health-Promoting Schools is a project jointly launched by the World Health Organization (Regional Office for Europe), the Council of Europe and the Commission of the European Communities. The programme for health-promoting schools aims at overall enhancement of health and social well-being of school children. It aims at promoting health in the school community by supporting development of health education programmes, introducing new ideas and teaching methods, presenting a variety of applicable action models, increasing interaction between schools and the surrounding community and developing collaboration between European schools.

A total of 75 Finnish comprehensive and vocational schools have entered the Network since 1993. Each school is committed to the project for three years and will implement the project programme according to the local needs and circumstances. The national curriculum for comprehensive schools defines health education as a key set of subjects that can be incorporated into other subjects. The newly established right of schools to plan their own teaching programmes offers them the opportunity to give greater consideration to health matters in drawing up their curricula. The purpose of health education is to support the healthy growth and development of the pupils, and to promote healthful lifestyles. It should guide the pupils to acquire the basic information, skills and readiness to preserve and promote their personal health and the health of their community.

The project work group produces teaching materials and organizes national and local seminars regularly for teachers, school nurses and other staff responsible for pupil welfare. In every school there is a school project team and project manager. At the seminars, the participants enter into an activity to share an experience with the aim of improving human relations skills through increased trust and safety in the team.

A health promotion programme can be evaluated at one or more of three levels: process, impact, and outcome. This study concentrates on the fundamental task in evaluating the community-based health education programme in schools - understanding the process of change. The aim is not simply to assess if a health promotion programme works, but to understand why it works and what really has happened in the school community.

In this article, I shall briefly present some conclusions drawn from interviews with teachers who participated in a project seminar in autumn 1994. Two themes of the interviews are discussed here: co-operation and interaction in the school community and the process of planning the health education curriculum.

The Elements of the Healthy School Programme

An Effective School Programme

The health education taking place in schools has been criticized for being desultory and random without system. Many institutions implement health education, but each of them operates according its own objectives. Health education lacks nation-wide plans.

The school system provides an essential channel for effective health education. Other major factors in the health education of the young are the healthcare system, municipal youth and temperance activities, the home, the media and voluntary organizations. A comprehensive understanding of how to promote health is crucial. The elements of a health education programme and the means by which the school can support health need to be outlined. In addition to the traditional division between environmental factors, school healthcare (primarily health inspections) and school health education, environment in which the young grow up and are educated is also stressed and not merely in relation to health.

Through the Healthy School Programme support material is produced to help teachers in their work. In producing the support material the aim is to take into consideration the utilization of versatile teaching methods.

To prevent smoking is an educational process in which it is not a question of a lack of knowledge but a lack of social and communication skills. On a par with teacher-centred methods functional and pupil-centred methods are to be used.

Increasing Co-operation

An individual school programme is planned and carried out in co-operation with, as far as possible, both various counterparts of the school community and representatives of the local authority.

Meanwhile the School Health Education Programme is put into effect on as large a scale as the school considers appropriate. The topic in question is dealt with during lessons, in the morning "openings" (short talks etc. transmitted to the pupils) and at parents' evenings. It is essential that parents are encouraged to act effectively in their environment. In each school, the aim is to form groups comprising parents, teachers, the headmaster and pupils. Co-operation and interaction between the school and home is to be made more effective by means of parents' evenings during which e.g. the smoking habits of the young are brought out and parents are informed of the prevailing smoking habits of the pupils.

Within school health education the power of the group is emphasized. At school, the benefits of not smoking are advertised through competitions that utilize group dynamics. Both competitions and theme days are designed to provide pupils with positive feedback on their non-smoking habits.

The Organization of the Community

It is most important that community-level leaders are available in schools. The schools are offered support by means of training that concerns the programme and that is directed at teachers and pupil-care personnel. In this way, commitment to the programme and correct implementation are guaranteed.

Every school participating in the Healthy School Programme should choose an intermediary. He or she takes part in the training with other willing persons, provides material, gives help with methods and otherwise promotes the development and realization of the programme.

Before the commencement of the actual programme it is introduced to local authority administrators to ensure that there is support from the upper administrative level and that the institutions outside the school are involved.

The project requires the support of the wider community and the creation of a more favourable attitude to the prevention of illness.

In implementing the programme the power of the group is utilized. In accordance with the possibilities, models that attract the young (peer leaders) are used as teachers - e.g. support pupils and idols. Support pupils act as positive role models for the other pupils.

The principles of group dynamics are utilized in declaring that "our class is a non-smoking class" and "our school is a non-smoking school". A good example of this is the Non-Smoking-Class competition that has been held among the eighth formers over the last three years.

Changes in Health Policies

This means direct environmental changes by which non-smoking habits among the young are supported. Such changes are, for example, the establishment of a smokeless environment, including smokeless staff rooms and bars, reinforced by the models provided by adults, idols and non-smoking teachers. Smoking estrangement groups for adults can also be included in the programme.

To bring about changes in health policies the role of different boards at the municipal level is emphasized in promoting non-smoking habits.

The Media:

Via the media, e.g. local radio stations and newspapers, the aim is to promote a favourable attitude amongst the public towards non-smoking habits. The members of the school community, such as pupils, teachers and healthcare staff, can utilize the media effectively to stimulate practical measures to reduce smoking among young people. The central objectives of the Healthy School Programme are:

1. The development of social and health education in schools
2. Emphasis on the welfare of the individual and the entire school community
3. The support and development of positive habits in behaviour

The following can be regarded as the operating principles of the Healthy School Programme:

1. Interaction
2. Pupil-centredness
3. Increase in self-control and self-assessment

4. Personal development
5. Positiveness
6. Fitness for application
7. Understanding health and health education

In every respect, the final conclusion could be that the preventative programme at the community level is more like "art" than "science" due to the fact that all the intervening factors cause confusion and also complicate the programme. The activity should involve administrators, teachers, healthcare personnel, parents and other individuals with influence at the community level who believe in the cause and take an interest in it.

Some Conclusions from the Interviews with the Teachers

Table 1. Co-operation and interaction.

COMMON NAME: HEALTHY SCHOOL	- a general rise in self-esteem - respect for the school - co-operation - greater acceptance & feedback - a caring and spontaneous atmosphere - in the curriculum: essential
CHANGE IN PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS	- students are motivated - social co-operation is increased - much common energy - relationships between the students & teachers are improved - everyone is involved & new ideas
ACTIVITY	- event calendar - school newspaper - theme weeks - environment project & international cooperation - non-smoking campaign - health education sessions
PARENTS ARE INVOLVED	- parents evening: healthy school project on view - visits to the children's homes - fathers are involved - questions to the parents: "What is a Healthy School?"

EXTERNAL PARTNERS	- municipal youth and social welfare offices - the police - new tobacco law is observed - approval of the school board

The Healthy School Project created a firm basis for the development of school activities. The name "Healthy School" itself generated respect for the school; especially the pupils thought so and they accepted the project enthusiastically. The teachers felt that without the Healthy School Project such major changes in the school would have been unimaginable. A general rise in self-esteem occurred in the school community. The teaching and other staff increased their social communication in consequence of this common idea. Now something was really being done, not just talked about. Drawing up the new curricula had strengthened co-operation to some extent.

Due to the positive change in personal relationships a lot of common energy was found and the staff initiated many different activities. Everybody was eager to experiment, even with surprising ideas. For example, the kitchen staff actively presented new ideas to be carried out with the pupils. The school cleaners, too, contributed to the school newspaper that the pupils produced. The activities were "community action". "Collective discussion" proved positive and discussion of common matters happened little by little spontaneously.

Overall, the functioning of the school community was emphasized in the interviews with the teachers. However, they did not think that too much had been offered and they had tried to maintain a balanced approach. The character of the pupils, like not being capable of sustained effort, was also taken into consideration. All the time there was some activity, a little at a time. The pupils had been very motivated in common activities. The teachers considered that the giving of positive feedback had been learned easily in the school. The pupils had shown sympathy to the teachers, too. Attention had been paid to relations between teachers and pupils, especially if, for example, a teacher was a thorn in the pupils' flesh. The supportive function of peer leaders improved and helped, for example, to prevent school bullying.

With many new things going on in the schools, the teachers sometimes felt tired. Resources were limited and action needed money. However, the Healthy School Programme was experienced positively in spite of all the other work. The roles of the school project team and project manager were important; without them the operation would not have been guided.

The Healthy School Programme had been presented at a parents' evening. Thus, the parents were aware of the project from the beginning. The pupils and their parents had been questioned about how they understood a "healthy school". The answers were very similar: the school is free from smoking and drugs and it is comfortable, clean and human. These topics were stressed on two theme days that followed the inquiry. In the upper-secondary school, too, the same themes were highlighted because it shared the same classrooms with the comprehensive school.

The teachers visited the homes of the seventh formers and talked with the parents and pupils. As a result, the fathers, too, were involved and had taken a very positive stand towards the project. The fathers attended the school on the parents' evenings, too, after the home visits. The teachers felt that this was the best form of co-operation between homes and schools. Now the both sides gave positive feedback and communicated more easily, too.

The teachers outside the Healthy School Project team did not consider the programme as important as the teachers within the team. Some teachers, in spite of the importance of the programme, were frustrated because insufficient resources had been directed towards it. Changing the teachers' attitudes had taken time, too. It was difficult for the teachers to find mutually convenient times for meetings to plan of the schedule, and after the schoolday they were too tired.

In addition to the healthcare service, co-operation also extended to municipal youth, social and church activities. The police had co-operated with the youth offices concerning drugs. For example, in the parents' evening the youth office discussed the drugs theme with the parents. The members of the school board and the headmaster supported the Healthy School Project.

Table 2. The health education curriculum.

PORTION ALLOCATED TO HEALTH EDUCATION	- implementation through activities - written principles - new titles for health education - as optional "on the tray" - double lessons in health education & physical training
INVOLVEMENT OF THE STUDENTS	- not essential in planning process - opinions of the students are asked: "What is the purpose of the school?" - students receive regular reports on curriculum plans and give feedback - students are equal & grown up
INTEGRATION INTO OTHER SUBJECTS	- health education & internationalization - biology, physical training, home economics - physical education teacher "as a promoter" - subject-based plans are in progress - health education is integrated into every subject - agreement on the division of labour - school nurse too little involved

ROLE OF THE TEACHERS

- health team: the practical matters
- teachers as producers and evaluators of learning materials
- general plan for the whole school period
- profile of the school: European Healthy Schools Project

There was an attempt to show clearly the portion of the teaching allocated to health education, and the principles were written down. The teachers wanted to implement health education by concrete action which would produce results. They created interesting new names for health education in order to arise interest in the topic among the pupils. The proportion of the timetable devoted to health education varied considerably from school to school. It could be as an optional subject among the other optional subjects. Or health and sport were combined in a double lesson, which was thought to cause difficulties in treating health education effectively throughout the school years. Usually separate lessons were not allowed for health education.

A special combined course was planned for the seventh formers that included teaching in health education, internationalization, data processing, communication, and food and customs. The combined course integrated many subjects and there was a distinct plan for it. The course would continue with the same principles in the following years. In the ninth form the portion of health education was half of the lessons of the learning counsellor. Teaching included the topics of human relations and family education. In the future, it was planned that health education will also be a compulsory subject for every class (now it was only in the seventh form). In this way the school tried to specialize in consequence of being in the Healthy School network.

Integration of health education into other subjects varied markedly from school to school, and it had several school-based applications. In general, integration was attempted. As a written plan it could be good, but the teachers considered that practical integration was difficult. The topic was unfamiliar to many teachers, every subject teacher had his/her own plans or there was no time to agree upon the division of teaching in health education.

The teachers put emphasis on bringing students into health education planning, although the pupils did not participate in the planning work group after all. Students were asked "What is the purpose of the school?" and how they would like to learn concerning health issues in every subject. A common meeting with the pupils was organized, where the teachers told them about the planning stage of the curriculum, and asked the pupils for feedback on it. The students were regarded as equal, grown up learners and co-operators. The parents of the pupils were not involved in the planning process but an inquiry of their hopes for health education was conducted.

The health team (the sports teachers and the school nurse) had planned the portion of health education. The aim was to produce a general plan for health education for the whole school stage. Some teachers produced teaching materials and tested them, too. Biology, sport and home economics were emphasized but there was an attempt to integrate health education into all subjects gradually. For example, in mathematics the teachers utilized the existing Freenet communications network in teaching health education. The school nurse was too little involved in school health education, since she was only occasionally in the school. The portion of school health care did not appear clearly in the curriculum of all schools. However, by co-operative planning it was possible to avoid the teacher and the school nurse teaching the same matters overlappingly, e.g. about smoking.

Conclusion

In Finland, health education taking place in schools has been criticized for being desultory and random without system. Now in the Healthy School Programme the teachers seem to make health education more effective in the sense of a systematic approach and united objectives in drawing up a health education teaching plan as part of the educational plan of the school. In this way, health education can be integrated into all school subjects and accordingly the responsibility of the teacher, in every subject, is emphasized.

Co-operation and interaction between the school and home is made more effective, and there is more responsibility for health care also at the community level and co-operation between other institutions carrying out health education has increased. It is most important that community-level leaders are available in schools. The supervisory committee offers support through training that concerns the programme, and which is directed to teachers and healthcare personnel. In this way, commitment to the programme and correct implementation are guaranteed.

Examples of Implementing Educational Issues in the Context of Different Societies

FUTURES THINKING - A PERSPECTIVE TO IMPROVE THE SCHOOL

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The Finnish primary schools - high classed and homogeneous?

The present primary school system fitted fine with the idea of a welfare state which arouse in the 1960s. The comprehensive school was to render possible social advancement in society and to let the reserve of talent come into use and to improve the social justice (cp. Lehtisalo & Raivola 1986). There was also the idea of demolishing class distinctions, and by supportive teaching to minimize the differences between Finnish children which are caused by regional inequality or socioeconomic circumstances of their parents. The idea of equality was based on similarity.

Even though in the 1980s the assumption of equality was formulated to be considered as "qualitative equality" and the schools were coordinated, has the contents of classroom work has remained relatively the same to all the pupils. Evenness and homogeneity could be seen as a result of our school system. According to the latest research on school achievement there is an upward trend on the stage of learning ability among primary school students in Finland (Havola & Saari 1993) and the quality of learning is high (Linnakylä & Saari 1993; Elley 1992). In comparison with the international results the dispersion of Finnish students' test results is smaller than the others; there are less poor and less top-ranking students in Finland than in the other research countries (Saari 1993). The variation among single students is still remarkable, some have learned everything and some almost nothing.

Homogeneity seems to be gained nationwide. School achievement results in many school subjects are quite similar in different parts of Finland (Linnakylä & Saari 1993). On closer consideration the children in the northern part of Finland and the children living in the countryside are not doing quite as well as the others. Are the teachers in rural areas less qualified or is there a lack of proper stimulant in rural homes or is the code of the language defect, as one could assume according to the investigation made among the Swedish speaking population in Finland (Brunell 1993). Open questions still remain to be solved by further research, but also the northern and countryside schools as they are setting their educational goals and trying to improve the quality of their teaching.

There is always a certain amount of uncertainty in the concept of school achievement and in measuring any achievement, so the findings of research on school achievement cannot be considered as the truth of the Finnish primary school nor as a school-leaving certificate. School itself is just one of the factors behind school achievement. For instance home, environment and peergroups have a remarkable role in providing the right attitudes and examples for children. It is doubtful whether measured achievement in single subjects is the essential matter of educational goals or school practice. The research subject has been the most easily measurable school subjects like mathematics, foreign languages and mother tongue. Pen and paper tests are simple, but they only give limited information. It is important to develop more distinguished evaluation methods.

Homogeneous product can also be a product of even thickness. Are there too many average students sitting in average class rooms? It is alarming that depression among Finnish school children is more common than in other European countries and that the therapy does not seem to be available even for the most depressed children (Puura 1995). There is unfortunately no consideration on the cause of depression in the extent medical research, but presumably school has its share in proportion to depression. An over active, interfering student who regularly violates school norms will get attention and care and there are places better suitable for him /her in supportive classes or in special schools. A silent and unnoticeable student can be well accepted in the frames of school norms; she/he will not learn but on the other hand he/she is not disturbing anybody - why to worry ?

The Finnish primary school - androgyn and middle classed?

The promotion of sexual equality is a commission to school by the law but there are no written instructions or guidance for instance for the curriculum process. The official national curriculum directive (anon 1994) lies on the naive assumption of androgyn school. The regulations are based on the idea of individuality but forget the basic distinction between men and women. There are differences between male and female culture as well as between individual male and female targets of education. Gender differences should be taken into consideration when setting the educational goals and in everyday school practice.

Education based on the radical idea of sexual equity has not succeeded in Finland according to the research reports made by Stenström & al. (1987) and Kuusinen (1992). Sex is one of the major factors of school achievement and it was the most significant factor in occupational choice made by secondary education students about ten years ago (Nummenmaa & al. 1985) and the situation appears to be the same according to the statistics for selections made in national vocational education. Girls' better achievement at school does not guarantee a better future. Girls in general make more conservative choices during school time and during further education and the amount of girls decreases in higher education. It is worth considering that it is harder to get into the trades girls choose the most and they more seldom than boys get into the specific vocational school they would prefer (Lahelma 1987).

School does not create the inequality between the sexes. Children's way of life is already divided sexually when they start school. But on the other hand, school does not alleviate the differences between males and females. Girls will see the school where they do better than boys but on other direction they see the society where men do better. There are signs of slow progress but if the change is based on instructions from a higher organ it probably is inefficient. Gender problems are common but they are also problems of a single school making decisions and producing the curriculum.

One of the essential issues concerning educational equality is the achievement of children with different background. Social status (socio economic status of the parents) defines even more than sex the achievement at school and in the society (Kivirauma & Kivinen 1986; Brunell 1993). Also in Israeli and American cultures the high social status of the parents still appears to be an important factor when predicting good school achievement (Amato 1987, 213; Ninio 1990; Cassidy & Lynn 1991). Finnish culture is often seen consistent in the way of life and in economic settings. The education and the occupation of the parents, the income bracket and the values of the family vary both locally and nationally. Schools have limited and questionable opportunities to form these basic tasks to fit better with the desires of a school. The newcomer has the right to be accepted the way he/she is, but the background of the children is still an important underlying factor in school practice.

In Kuusinen's (1992) broad longitudinal study the advantageous background of school children turned out to be the key for good school achievement. For closer inquiry Kuusinen standardized the aptitude of the children. Students from the highest socio-economic background had a good or fair school achievement, never poor, and those who belonged to the lowest social class did more often poor or fair than good at school. High social rank was very supportive, because even the ungifted children with high socio-economic status achieved good or fair results more often than poor at school.

Aptitude (or talent) is a changing, culture based concept, so research is always one step behind. Socio economic background is not a potent factor by itself but a collage of different factors. Parents' educational level (especially the father's), parents' occupation and wealth has been so far the explanatory variable in research. Variables like attitudes, lingual codes and abilities, behavioral norms etc. are even more complicated, hard to verify and because of that, neglected in analysis. Even though supportive acts by schools have been directed to those who do not do well at school, it has not ensured more equal school achievement. It is interesting to notice that the children who are placed in special education (schools for mentally retarded, transitional classes, contemporaneous special education) are homogeneous in social background: nine out of ten come from the lowest social class homes (Kivirauma & Kivinen 1986).

School cannot solve social problems but a single school can decide whether to pay any attention to the to child's background or not. Mäki-Kulmala (1989) emphasizes the importance of a family taking responsibility. She claims that it is common in our society to be a guardian of a family or to protect a family and not to make a family responsible for their acts. By doing this the family is losing one of its primary functions - the socialization. Also the economical problems, the fast rhythm of life and the loosening family ties are to blame. According to Mäki-Kulmala the problem is not that of the parents transferring archaic models of adults, old customs or yesterday's values, but that the parents have no developed value- or role models themselves to transmit to their children. In this case the only education will be school education.

Identifying the problem should lead to solving the problem. Unfortunately schools have not recently succeeded in improving the equality of education. Instead, the amount of remedial teaching and placement to special education have decreased and the number of students in a class has increased. It is sad to say that too often in planning and decision making both at the level of an individual school and educational politics the 'contract for future delivery' is often forgotten. Economic profitability and human justice give reasons for longitudinal perspective in planning and decision making.

New challenges for schools

There are problems to be solved inside the school but there are also several enormous challenges from outside to which the schools should respond. Besides the defects in school system, also the fast social change and global issues concern education. The rapid changes in technology and economics and the vast growth of information as well as the global ecological problems should be taken into consideration at the school. Racing and efficiency demands are part of today's educational politics and they are taking the place from the former main issues like equal opportunities in school. It is possible that school work will become more selective, competitive and assertive (Kuusinen 1994) and individual specialization will turn out to be unequalization (Aho 1994).

Changing education in a changing world

After the good years business is still slack which has made people more aware of the state economy. It would be an easy solution to join the economical race again if the limits of growth on the former basis would not be common knowledge. All the grand research reports of the estimated changes in technology, in economics, population etc., (such as The Limits of Growth, Global 2000, Mankind at a Turning Point, The Year 2000, etc.) show analogously that the present way of using material and energy is intolerable in the near future. It is important to separate development and progress because by the present speed of growth the production of nutriment, the amount of population and the estimated lifetime will strongly decrease after a few decades (Meadows & al.1993).

Futures research is new in many fields of science. One of the main ideas of futures research is, instead of foretelling, to produce knowledge to help to make necessary decisions and to influence social and global development. It can also be seen as a source of criticism and new ideas. The Future Barometre (Mannermaa & Mäkelä 1993) is a pilot project based on the work of an expert panel. It shapes the future of education in Finland up to the year 2004 and 2017. The results of the barometer emphasize the importance of aspects of human qualification in the future. The most important qualification aspect will be learning ability. Also present low ranked estimates like global future thinking, tolerance of dissimilarity and ecological thinking are rising, as well as ethics and esthetics.

Even those critics who claim that school is too theoretical and full of cut knowledge should be satisfied with the results of the Future Barometre. In Mikko Takala's meritorious research on 'School Allergy' (1992) there is the profound statement that especially the secondary stage of primary school is too theoretical for the particular age group which needs experiences. Too much knowledge is also unsatisfying according to the brain scientist Bergström (1992). Concentrating on cut knowledge at an early stage can even lead a person to become mentally duller. From his point of view esthetics, seeing the entirety and values (found by oneself) are essential in education. Bergström's and Takala's ideas are not unique nor new, but they still are important. As a matter of fact the same ideas about knowledge separated from its social context could be found in the writings of Dewey and Childs as early as 1933.

The futures researcher Mika Mannermaa criticizes the school much on the same basis. He claims that school uses false thinking: knowledge is learned by heart, precise notes are made about past matters. The knowledge is considered secure, eternal and unchangeable. Mannermaa desires more criticism, relativity and uncertainty instead of dogmatic. The question of school achievement is also a question of pedagogy. Co-operation, communicative abilities and individuality form a challenging triangle.

The criticism against cut information is open and international. It is interesting to notice though that the standpoint of the definition varies. The French sociologists Foucault and Bourdieu emphasize the social origin of information. According to Foucault (Pirttilä 1993) information is an essential factor in making and creating the structures of power. Bourdieu (1985) defines information as one of the many - but still the most important - factor of symbolic power. Masuda and Toffler (Toffler 1991), on the other hand, regard the meaning of information as the main resource of power in the society.

It would be easy to pick more demands concerning different pedagogical or methodological subject matters from the media or from research results. There are a lot of claims and those who enter a claim, and their quality and profoundness varies. Schools cannot respond to all requirements made nor to get involved in many projects. School criticism is, however, worth noticing as a remarkable challenge for educational planning.

The cultural change of work and education

The most accurate and a very important challenge for the society as well as for the individual is the crises of the work culture - the enduring decrease of wage work and the huge unemployment rate. One of the main tendencies to solve the problem in Finland has been to increase the educational level. The essential question is whether it is wise to educate the unemployed to new occupations in fields where there are already problems. Is the contribution due to product?

Unemployment changes the meaning of profession and wage work. Ulrich Beck (1986) presumes that education must be reformed in this situation. He gives an interesting example. He compares school with a ghost train. There is a railway station to buy a ticket, there is a train to step into, but where the train stops no one knows. Even the Finnish educational optimism can vanish quickly if the examples in real life prove to be something else than educational goals or education politics would want them to be.

In underemployment society education will have the same tasks as in a society with full employment according to Melametsä (1994). The content of these tasks (productive task, socialization, selection task) and their mutual relationship will change though. In underemployment society it is not reasonable to offer occupational specialized vocational education nor higher education to all but the elementary education and basic vocational education would be available to everyone. The productive task of education would be more specific and narrow than before and it would challenge the schools to educate some people to more exacting level than before. The socialization task will become more accurate than before - there will be a need for adaptive education, citizen activities and cultural hobbies. During school time children will be selected to employment or unemployment.

The vision that Melametsä gives is just one among many. It is quite a hopeless vision to those children who were not born in the right family. The decrease of wage work leads to the question of adjustment. Are we able to adjust to the changing situation - how do we respect the work itself? Broady (1985) who brought the idea of the hidden curriculum into the daylight, claims that school succeeds well in teaching what the children are not good at. And for instance a typical way of thinking among school children could be "I'm not good at maths" which suites well with mass unemployment. It is not easy to change the Protestant ethic values, which have been the leading values in western society for centuries. In Melametsä 'model' people will be divided into 'grain and chaff'. Antikainen (1985) creates a more equal point of view in one of his articles. He suggests that instead of seeing work as a duty, it is important in dualeconomy to separate the concepts of work and duty. This would mean not only a new definition and distribution of work but also a remarkable change in life style.

Sensitivity to social change and needs is the most important challenge to education. By collecting pieces the unity that would serve either society or the individual will not be reached. New thoughts and ideas are easily found, but the risk to run after fashions is obvious. The re-evaluation of organizations' goals and the products of work requires profound arguments and the change process needs reflective questions - what, how, why.

The school and the future

After several 'fat years', during which schools like other public organizations developed only quantitatively, it is important to use the scantiness effectively. Efficiency is a positive qualifier if it will be understood as exact use of resources of a working team. Underestimating the resources is not motivating and overestimating will cause weariness. In the latest national guidebook - Basis for Primary School Curriculum making (Anon. 1994) - the stress lays on efficiency, which is important especially when creating resources for better learning opportunities. Schools are encouraged to raise the level of education, to recreate the school subjects and to pay more attention to individuality and free choice. The official national view is broad and supportive to the ongoing setting of goals and curriculum making.

The new destination given to schools is based on changes in authoritative thinking but also on changing concept of learning. The former behavioristic psychological model of learning meant in practice a delivery of information/knowledge which is quite the opposite of the idea of guidance in learning according to constructivism and humanistic theory. The former main idea of static talent leads to circular conclusion: the student is talented and therefore can learn quickly and easily; but it was the speed and easiness of learning that defined her/him as a talented student at the beginning (Leimu 1993). According to the new concept the talent is a changeable qualification, a kind of starting level, which can be lifted by processing the experiences of the learner. (cp. Kohonen & Leppilampi 1994)

The change of the concept of learning seems to be small, meaningless. It will remain that way as long as the concept is considered as external, theoretical thinking and not as a part of daily school life. In fact the new concept means a remarkable change in the role of a teacher, in learning and in setting the educational goals. Teacher as an information dealer has taken into account the developmental stage of the child, planned the teaching sessions, activated and motivated the children and in the end tested the knowledge children reached. A new kind of trainer teacher conducts more heterogeneous team. To be successful the teacher of the new approach will plan, check the information available, set the goals with the children and take into account the individual element - the unique child.

The demand of change is great for a single teacher, because the question is not just to reset some external factors, but to change the way of thinking. Teaching which is divided into certain subjects and which is located behind the closed classroom door is far from the individually supportive school which gives a lot of positive experiences. It is possible for schools to advance just by starting to evaluate and reflect on everything done in the school and by teamwork trying to find new goals from the future for the future - the time we are raising the children for.

The future perspective is challenging for school if we think about the rapid changes in society. And the speed seems to become faster and faster as Alvin Toffler (1971) predicted a few decades ago. We live a critical period of time during which no one can foretell the future. On the other hand the future is not predestined, but ensues from the choices and acts we make today. Those researchers who have thought about human future orientation, like de Jouvenel (1969), McHale (1969) and Polak (1937), do emphasize that there are several possible futures to be made and to be contributed. It is important for an Aristotelian person to see the effect of shaping the future to the quality of decision making at the present and at the future.

The future perspective is also a perspective of hope for schools. We can not know about the future, not even about our own, but we act every day like we could (Ketonen 1986). On longer term we could speak about the possibilities of the future. Antikainen (1985) considers the linkage between the state economy and education to be indirect and complicated but relatively independent. Therefore schools might be able to set goals for the future. Quite often school and education are seen as a projection of the society and not as a creative innovator. Johan Galtung (1980) encourages to seek for values on which the goals are based on, and to find those tendencies in society by which the goals are to be reached and the social forces which ought to be liberated.

There have been many different school improvement projects all over the world. A lot of money and time have been spent to empower the schools, but the projects have not succeeded very well. The ordinary model for school improvement begins with noticeable problems of a school. The next stage would be setting the goals for the school. But at the moment when the outside agent leaves the school, the stages of implementation and evaluation are forgotten (cp. Fullan 1993; Hargreaves 1992). The improvement models are very problematic also because there is really nothing new inside the planning circles - there is a lack of new ideas, new perspectives. School can change but improvement or progress is not possible without new, wider perspective - a perspective of the future society. Let's turn the focus on future!

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EARLY EDUCATION IN IRELAND - TOWARDS COLLISION OR COLLABORATION?

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There has been relatively little written about the situation regarding early education in Ireland. As a result I found that in preparing this paper I was writing an historical overview rather than a paper simply discussing the current situation.

Before I begin my journey back in time there are some specific points about young children and education in Ireland that I would like to clarify. In the first place I must point out that I am talking about the situation in the Republic of Ireland and this is quite different, despite our proximity and common past history, to what prevails in the North of Ireland.

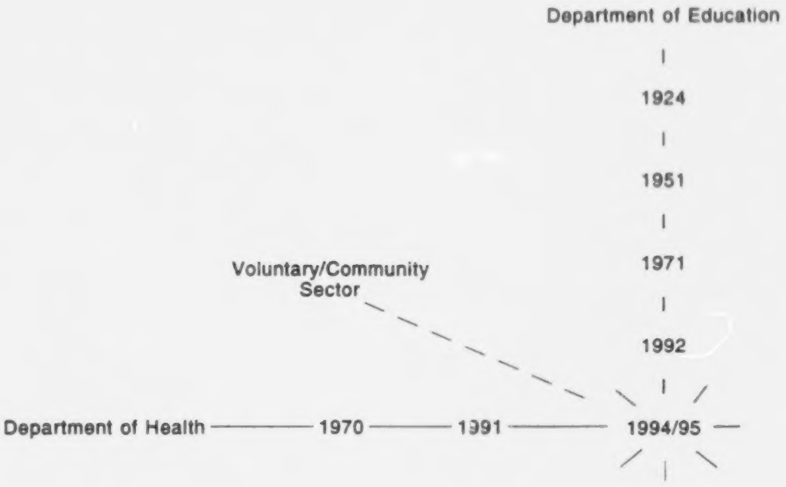
Some facts:

* Most early educational services (outside the primary school junior and senior infant classes for four and five year olds) are provided by voluntary organisations or run privately.
* State support for early services is exclusively for children considered to be disadvantaged in some way.
* Early childhood services are increasingly being asked to accept older siblings for after-school and holiday care.
* There is no State regulation of early childhood services
* Compulsory school age in Ireland is six years. This is in line with most European countries - however -
* Eightyeight percent of four year olds attend the junior classes of the primary school.
* All classes in the primary school are taught by teachers with a common training.
* Up to seventy percent of children are in class sizes of thirty children or more.

- Except in exceptional circumstances teachers conduct classes without assistants.
- There is no national policy on the provision of early education in Ireland.

As in most other countries an artificial divide between care and education exists in the field of early education in Ireland. For the purposes of this paper I will take each Department and discuss their involvement in service delivery and support. Graphically this can be represented thus:

Table 1. Important Dates in the History of Early Education in Ireland.



Department of Education

At the time of our independence Ireland was a predominantly English speaking country. After the famine years of the 1840's there had been a rapid decline in population, an increase in emigration and an increased dependence on the state for relief. These, among other factors, led to the very sudden disappearance of a language that appeared to have no value or currency in the world of the time. Once we became an independent republic the Department of Education set about redressing this situation and looked to the primary schools.

We have, in Ireland, a well established primary/national school system since 1831 and education has always been highly valued. Historically children attended school from as young as three years. In an environment where the vast majority of three, four and five year olds were attending the local national school the Minister of Education determined, in 1924, that the junior classes would all be conducted through the medium of Irish (Gaeilge). This decision had a huge impact on the type of education thus provided. At this time, and in line with Britain and Europe, the curriculum of the junior classes was becoming more child-centred. However, when the predominantly English language trained teachers were required to teach through Irish and ensure that their pupils developed a skill in the language any innovation had to give way to a directive, prescriptive curriculum. The intention behind this action was that young children, so susceptible to learning, would acquire the language and, in one generation, we would overcome the past. Unfortunately the government expected too much of the school system which, at the best of times, is a conservative institution rather than an agent of social change. There was much opposition to this directive and by the early 1940's it was clear that it would take a great deal more to bring Irish back as the spoken language and the damaging directive was finally revoked.

Unfortunately this educational experiment meant that our young children in the 20's; 30's and 40's had not received a very child-centred programme and a review of the curriculum for infants was established. This led to the publication of the 1951 Infant curriculum which was much more in line with the educational thinking of the day. In school, at least, early education was getting back on tracks.

In 1971 a new curriculum for the whole primary school was published. In principal it was an integrated curriculum with a child-centred focus. In practice, however, large class sizes and little in-service support meant that the expected move away from the more teacher directed education took a long time coming. Indeed relatively recent research suggests that our teaching in all classes - including those for four and five year olds - may still be too directive and adult led.

The early 1970's also saw an increased interest in the potential of preschooling as an agent in overcoming educational disadvantage, a head-start, and the first purpose built preschool was opened. It was known as the Rutland Street Project and was supported by the Department of Education and the Bernard van Leer Foundation. This was a pilot project for 3-5 year olds in a disadvantaged, inner city area. It was evaluated over a five year period and the results reflect those of other projects with pupils showing an IQ gain which faded on school entry. A recent follow up of the original experimental group shows that there are grounds for believing that the project had a limited longterm effect for some. However, as with so many pilot projects, it remains the only such service of its kind in Ireland.

In the mid 1980's attention became focussed on the educational needs of our traveller population. Travellers are a distinct group in Ireland who travel from place to place and among whom a large percentage of children have only very sporadic school attendance. One of the developments was that voluntary groups, in an ad hoc way, began to set up preschools for young traveller children and received a grant from the Department of Education to pay for a teacher and some equipment. Although supported by grant from the Department of Education they are not an integral part of the department and there are, for example, no guidelines of practice or curricular supports and advice.

We have no legislation governing primary education in Ireland and the government is anxious to change this. As a preparation for this the Department of Education published a Green Paper in 1992 and a White Paper in 1995. In the Green Paper very little reference was made to preschool provision except to make the point that by providing places for most four and five year olds at primary school the Department was satisfied that preschool needs were being met. This led to a great deal of discussion and heated debate among those interested in early education and it did have some impact. The White Paper made a commitment to establishing local Early Start preschools in designated disadvantaged areas. This approach was in line with the governments targeted anti-poverty strategy. The first eight Early Start preschools opened in September 1994. They were well financed, located in national schools where there was space and were staffed by a trained primary teacher and an assistant. Each preschool had sixteen children per group.

This action on the part of the Department of Education, which could have proved so positive for early education in Ireland, was undertaken with little or no consultation with those already providing preschool services - this set the stage for the collision of this papers title!

Department of Health

The Department of Health is mainly responsible with the health care of the Irish population. Under the 1970 Health Act the Department - through its eight Health Boards - is empowered to support, by grant, daycare services without which individuals might require residential care. This section allows for voluntary groups to seek grant aid for setting up day nurseries and family resource centres with attached preschools - de facto, therefore, the Health Boards support, where given, is for children and families considered to be disadvantaged. In the early 1970's there were less than ten such services in the Eastern region (the largest in the State) and at the time of writing there are up to forty. The Boards involvement with these early educational services is mainly as a grant aiding agency - they offer no guidelines and make no requirements with respect to, for example, adult:child ratio, daily programme or the training of staff.

In 1991 a Child Care Act was passed in which increased responsibility for preschool services was given to the Department of Health. The Child Care Act empowers the Department of Health to supervise and regulate pre-school services but the relevant section is not yet in place. Health Boards have, however, established Childcare Advisory Committees. These committees are responsible for issues relating to the protection and welfare of children up to the age of eighteen and include a representative form the early services in their membership.

The expansion of the Department of Health's role in early childhood services over the recent past has led to a situation of Departmental overlap where Health Board nurseries or preschools are located in areas of designated disadvantage now being targeted by the Department of Education. In fact the Health Board's facility to support such services is so prescribed that they are virtually all located in areas of disadvantage and there seems to be a clear need for collaboration between Departments to ensure that funds are used to maximum effect and that services are meeting the varied needs of children and their families and not missing certain areas while overlapping in others!

Community/Voluntary Sector

Since the 1970's there has been a growth of the private and community developed early educational services. The most widespread are the playgroups and the Naíonraí (Irish speaking playgroups). More recently there has been a significant growth in private full-daycare services - a sector with virtually no State support. This growth reflects social changes with an increase in the number of working mothers and also an increase in the number of lone parents. Many of the community services accept children who might be considered 'at risk' or disadvantaged in some way and receive a small local authority support for this. Funding is very limited and all such services must charge those attending a nominal fee. The recent development under the Department of Education are having an effect on these services also as the Early Start preschools are provided free of charge.

Collision or collaboration?

There are significant developments in early education in Ireland at the moment and it is an exciting time. These include Ireland's ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child; a Strategic Management Initiative at Departmental level which should improve inter-departmental communication; the appointment, in 1994, of a junior Minister for childcare - while he is mainly responsible for protection and welfare he also has responsibility in education and justice; and a targeted Anti-Poverty Strategy which emphasises that social, as well as economic, initiatives must be supported if we are to improve the conditions of those living in poverty, many of whom are children.

It is clear from the overview of service delivery outlined above, however, that the lack of a national policy means that there is great variation in services offered, little possibility for assessing and regulating quality and a very limited choice for a wide number of children and their families. We need, in early education in Ireland, to:

* develop a national policy in early childhood education
* create structures to support the variety of services necessary to meet the varied needs of our population
* review the training of those working with young children and break down the divisions which create tension and divisiveness across the professions
* review the curricular issues across services and debate openly what it is we wish for our young children

The answer to the question posed in the title rests with the Irish government. Ultimately it is they who will facilitate collaboration or preside over a collision.

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FORMAL SCHOOLING FOR 5 YEAR OLDS IN NEW ZEALAND

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Compulsory schooling commences for children in New Zealand when they are 6 years old. However, all primary schools accept children from the day of their fifth birthday. There are no set intake dates, on any school day, a new pupil may enter the class for new entrants and become part of the school system, which may last for the following 13 years of their life. An estimated 95 % of all children do make this early start. The challenge for teachers is to provide class programmes that are responsive to the needs of these children, in an environment that is conducive to their further successful learning.

While parents and caregivers have supported the learning of preschoolers, that which has occurred for them independently is also significant. Children are powerfully reinforced by their increased understanding of the world. The reward for the attainment of new skills, frequently involves increased autonomy which is praised by adults. First teachers in primary schools have an obligation to search for activities which extend the learner but do not require an excessive reliance on adults.

New Zealand is a small country of approximately 3 million people. It is geographically and increasingly ethnically diverse. English is the first language of schooling, although in recent years the status of Maori, the language of indigenous New Zealanders has increased to become a compulsory element of the curriculum. The small population and ease of communication has made the concept of a national curriculum achievable. The advantage of such a document is that it ensures that children may move from school to school with reduced transition difficulties.

The "National Curriculum Framework" covers the 13 years of schooling and dictates all that is taught in New Zealand schools. Teachers are accountable to the Minister of Education through the Education Review Office, whose officers visit schools regularly. Evidence of programmes that reflect the document must be provided for their perusal, along with measures of pupil achievement against its objectives. It is supported by syllabus statements that cover each curriculum subject and detail expectations in relation to skills, knowledge and learning processes. The document outlines a set of principles and explains essential learning skills.

> "The principles give direction to the curriculum in New Zealand schools. They are based on the premises that the individual student is at the centre of all teaching and learning, and that the curriculum for all students will be of the highest quality. The principles affirm and reflect New Zealand's identity. They provide national direction while allowing for local discretion. All schools must ensure that the principles are embodied in their programmes."[1]

On examination the principles reveal a flexibility that is not readily detectable in some of the syllabus statements, which dictate objectives, and suggest learning and assessment activities. One of the key elements for teachers of 5 year olds focuses on the fact that teachers are to design programmes, which are appropriate to the learning needs of the children. As the achievement objectives and associated learning activities are divided into levels that may span 2 year periods, it is reasonable to expect that many of the examples provided, are more appropriate for children who have had 1 or 2 years of schooling.

This does not mean to imply, that competency would not be achieved by any of the children. Rather, it points to the necessity of the teacher understanding the curriculum and the terminology used in each specialist area. This is to allow the identification of possible indicators that demonstrate the understanding of key concepts, and the acquisition of skills and knowledge.

When consideration is given to the fact that 5 curriculum areas have been reviewed since 1993 with reviews of the others to follow, the enormity of the task for primary teachers, who work across all subjects, is appreciated.

A further principle which says that the document encourages the independence of learners must also be considered,

> "The school curriculum will foster the development of the knowledge, understanding, skills, and attitudes that will empower students to take increasing responsibility for their own learning. It will provide students with satisfying and worthwhile experiences which will motivate them to continue learning through life."[2]

This indicates the importance of the first school experiences as being successful and positive. The schools that these 5 year olds enrol into vary in size from around 10 to 400 children. The larger schools are more common and favoured by the government as being more cost effective. Typically 5 year olds enter the first class where there are less than 20 pupils but the size of the school, the formality of the environment and the presence of firm routines make it a vastly different experience.

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[1] "New Zealand Curriculum Framework" Ministry of Education, Wellington 1993.

[2] "New Zealand Curriculum Framework" Ministry of Education, Wellington 1993.

Few people would dispute that in the past, these first months at school have been long remembered, although not always for the unconditional joy felt by the new entrant. The importance of recognising the stress related to the transition to school, and taking steps to reduce this, is now recognised. Pre-school visits to the classroom by the children and their parents, to familiarise themselves with the environment and the programme, are encouraged as a way to alleviate the fears of the unknown. On these occasions, they have the opportunity to meet the pupils and teachers. They may begin to establish some friendships, experience the routines, gather their stationery requirements all of which, help to confirm their sense of belonging.

It must be remembered that the 5 year old child, has not previously operated within a 6 hour day, regulated into times for work, play and food, determined by an inflexible arrangement of bell ringing. The issues for these children are quite different from any that they will face during the remainder of their education.

It is quite feasible that in starting on the fifth birthday, the new entrant may be the only new person in the school. Viewed in this way the child is seen to be very special. However, from a personal perspective the child may feel like the only person who does not know how to read, write, sing the class songs, or interpret the teacher's instructions.

Successful transition is most likely to occur, when procedures take into account such issues, and teachers acknowledge the extreme importance of socialization and adaptation to the new environment. The development of friendships is a delicate process, through which the 5 year olds must be guided and supported. Teachers must speak frequently with the children about relationships with peers, how to use their oral language skills, and the effect of their actions - a smile as opposed to a hit. They must model positive behaviours and reinforce the welcoming signals to be given to new children. The arrival of new children constantly causes the dynamics of the group to change. The situation must be carefully managed so that the existing class members are aware of their support role.

Being empowered to sort out conflict amicably is essential, as there is generally a higher ratio of children to adults and frequently they are confined to a smaller space than in their pre-schools. The children must feel comfortable and confident when dealing with their peers, and not always feel the need to instigate teacher intervention. As in the adult world, conciliation and resolution of difficulties requires a high level of communicative skill and this must be taught.

A further strong influence over the success of the transition process is the expectation of the new parents and children. Parents tend to view the school situation from the framework of their past experiences. For those who have unpleasant memories of school, bringing the 5 year old to begin, may cause a high level of anxiety which can easily be transmitted to the child. A welcoming environment in the classroom is essential. Teachers must ensure effective communication strategies are in place and this is particularly relevant for non-English speaking families. If the children are engaged in independent work during the school visit time, the teacher can be free to speak with the visitors when required.

A recent sample of questions from parents indicated a strong interest in their children's welfare, emotionally and socially within the school context. The formation of friendships and confident usage of independent time in the playground were seen as priorities for parents. The children demonstrated that they also considered that friendships were important. They wanted to be able to go to classmates' houses after-school. Their comments about learning to read, say the alphabet, paint and draw, indicated that they are initially also concerned with the acquisition of academic skills.

It must be realised that the curriculum for pre-schools is quite different from that of schools. The "Draft Guidelines for Developmentally Appropriate Programmes in Early Childhood Services" is formatted in a manner that makes clear its intended priorities. There is no subdivision according to curricula, rather it is organised under the aims of well-being, belonging, contribution, communication and exploration. There is no evidence to suggest that the advent of a fifth birthday ought to change these priorities.

However, primary teachers must teach from the "National Curriculum Framework" and be able to provide evidence of teaching, learning and assessment across all areas of the curriculum. The achievement objectives published in each syllabus statement dictate the attainments to be met. These must be clearly understood by the teacher, in order that they can be divided into manageable steps, and the concept and process development carefully monitored. The teacher must determine what is reasonable to include for new entrant children, in each class, and the curriculum must be responsive to their needs.

Therefore, getting to know each child individually is crucial. Teachers must listen and observe activities across a range of experiences, to determine as much as they can about what the child expects and understands. Successful new learning is founded upon previous experiences. It is unacceptable to assume that all 5 year olds will require the same activities or is resources from which to work. Finding the skill and knowledge levels that represent appropriate challenges for each child is essential. Posing the right problem, or asking the searching question which captures their interest sufficiently, seems to be the obvious way by which to extend the learners.

The demands of assessment concern many teachers, who believe that time and energy expended in this area reduces that which is available for planning classroom activities. The data gathered about individual children really becomes the research base, from which teaching should occur. Efforts must be made to ensure that assessment practices fit naturally into the programme and reflect the range of ways in which children may demonstrate their competencies.

Information gained in this way then guides the content and delivery of the curriculum. While all areas must be addressed, obviously the content and style of delivery depends upon the needs and interests of the children. When introducing new topics the teacher must consider the range of learning styles and the prior knowledge. Activities need to be provided allowing for learning that is teacher directed, independently explored, or discovered through group and individual work. There must be a careful plan of possible learning experiences to support the objectives but also opportunities for the assessment of gathering of information to dictate the next learning steps.

For example a study of Antarctica may yield many questions from the children regarding the creatures and plant life that exist there. When recorded, the questions may then form the basis of book research. Quite simply this means, some children will see pictures that they identify as giving the answers. Those new entrants for whom book experience is a natural part of their lives to date, find this to be an easy task. Children become enthusiastic about this method of gathering information. Practical activities, such as looking after an ice cube for as long as possible within the classroom, lead to problem solving and associated independent activity and discussion. The suggestion of attempting to grow seeds, in the freezer compartment of the refrigerator, as a simulation of the polar environment is a firm indication that 5 year olds understand about ways to learn.

It is not until the children, begin to make their own contribution to the planning, that the learning becomes most active. Being shown a variety of possible activities over some weeks, encourages the children to generalize their experiences and suggest suitable activities of their own. The essential element in promoting this type of pupil interest, is the teacher's response. Acceptance and promotion of these ideas is a powerful reinforcer, showing that this behaviour is valued by the teacher and peers.

The programme must offer many opportunities for the child to operate independently. Learning activities that require a complex set of instructions serve to undermine the confidence of the child. Given equipment, ideas and time the children will frequently experiment and investigate ways to gain new skills and information. Careful prompt questions lead to new ways of thinking and the extension of ideas.

While teacher texts and handbooks often refer to individualised teaching programmes, it is a more effective usage of time to consider individualized learning. Some teachers have struggled to provide each child with a different reading text. With so many books to work from it takes an excessive amount of teacher time. However, if 3 or 4 different texts only are used, perhaps 8 children in a group could read it together. Skilful teacher questioning and observation could ensure that the children are learning the things that they individually need. The range of teacher questions and comments would allow for children to have greater opportunities to learn.

As in mathematics one child in a group may be making sets of up to 10 items, while the teacher can be discussing with others which numbers come before or after 5 or 7. Knowing the children and the learning steps is the key to providing successful individualised learning opportunities. Observations about the behaviours and knowledge of individual children are recorded and frequently updated to demonstrate gained skills or understanding. Such record keeping must be easily maintained by the teacher to ensure maximum usage and benefits to the children.

The programme must address each curriculum area but more importantly it must reflect the children. A school day needs to be varied interesting, without unnecessary surprises. Security is an important element. If each day contains the same timetable the new entrant begin to be able to predict what will happen. So long as the activities are non-threatening the child will look forward to them.

In recognition of their relatively short attention span, the concept of little and often should be acknowledged. Each day can contain a range of activities from across the curriculum, with a significant block being devoted to "free choice", the most valued activity. Anything that is disliked does not last for very long. Children who have been at school for as little as 6 weeks are able to set out equipment for their chosen tasks.

The classroom environment may be considered both physically and psychologically. The walls, tables and corners must reflect the interests of 5 year olds. There must be ample space to display their work or any artefacts, and treasures that they bring from home. Informative displays must be made to encourage the on-going pupil interest. All of these items are more meaningful if they involve consultation with the children.

Teachers must resist focusing on the academic curriculum to the exclusion of the personal and social development of the children. The pressure of assessing measurable learning outcomes, from a curriculum that is designed to cover all schooling, must not be allowed to dominate the school experiences of new entrants. In adapting programmes to suit the needs of the children, teachers must consider all of the factors that are conducive to developing confident class members who feel a degree of ownership and responsibility for their learning.

Challenges for Research-Based Teacher Training

THE TEACHER AS A RESEARCHER

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Introduction

We live in a time where the only obvious thing is continuous change. In order to survive among the unexpected changes in our everyday lives, we all must be capable of an inner process, change and development that means lifelong learning. The challenges faced by the teachers in Finnish schools and in educational practice are partly similar to the challenges met in the other parts of the world and partly different. Pluralism and new value conflicts, an increase of international contacts and a simultaneous emergence of divergence and inequality are among the global developmental prospects. In addition, the increase in the importance of the media and the decentralisation of power also require changes in educational practices and new approaches both in research and in teacher education. (Educational studies and teacher education towards the future 1994, 46-47)

My starting point is that in order to be able to meet the challenges of society and to promote the change in day-care centres and schools the teachers need to change themselves. An educator who is committed to his/her work is an autonomous professional who adopts the same kind of attitude towards his/her work as a researcher. The educators are required to have an ethical attitude, i.e. a commitment to improve the lives of all the children, the skills of a reflective practitioner, i.e. self-criticism, which means continuous self-assessment of their own educational methods. One indicator of the teacher's new expertise is the responsibility they take in supervising the pupils' learning and in maintaining their own command of the subject they teach and their pedagogical skills. The autonomy in teaching requires that the teacher has the power to decide on his/her work in a school or a day-care centre and the ability to participate in collegial partnership in order to improve his/her own action. (Teacher Quality Report 1993; Fullan 1993; Kohonen & Niemi 1995)

From the Training Paradigm towards a Reflective Practice in Finnish Teacher Education

The demand for changes in the school means great challenges for teacher education, which has to be renewed simultaneously with the school. However, the problems of teacher education are very much alike in the different parts of the world and the change is slow. In an international comparison, Finnish teacher education is of high quality, because all of our teachers from day-care centres to upper secondary schools are educated in universities. However, teacher education is seen as too conservative even in Finland and the changes in the schools are proceeding too slowly. People have doubts that the integration of research into studies has not always led to the hoped-for results. The criticism that has been presented is understandable, because the new university status in Finland was accompanied by an emphasis on psychologically and behavioristically oriented scientific bases of teacher education. This "training paradigm", where the teachers are seen as users rather than producers of knowledge, takes the teacher to be an object for research done by others and a user of results, in other words as an implementor of ready-made, highly developed programmes. In Finnish educational research, this paradigm has meant that statistical approaches and studies based on different inquiries gained a foothold in research. The students were instructed to measure the connections between individual variables separated from real school life. It is only gradually that the traditional behavioural paradigm has been replaced first by paradigm emphasizing personal development and then by a paradigm of reflective practice (Kansanen 1990). At the same time, an interest in action research has arisen and there has been a transition to qualitative approaches in the research done by students.

The education of teachers who are oriented towards the future and who develop their own work is not based on the training tradition but on a paradigm that emphasizes reflection by the teachers and an enquiring culture in education. Bullough and Gitlin (1989) use the concept "educative community", which is based on an ethic of caring and on the establishment of dialogical relations. A community of this kind strives for change and is committed to it. The knowledge of all the participants is equally valuable for this aspiration. Dialogue improves and broadens mutual understanding. Dialogue is considered to be promising in the development of teacher education towards increasing democracy (Fernandez-Balboa & Marshall 1994). In that case, dialogue means active conversation, which allows the opinions of all the participants to be heard and developed. Real dialogue is based on the understanding of one's own restrictions and the realisation that everyone needs other people. If there is an aspiration in teacher education to advance reflection based on dialogue, reason and the ethic of caring, the consideration of technical issues and values should not be separated in research. In addition, students should have time for reflection and for challenging activities that are shared and done together.

In Finnish teacher education, there has been a definite change towards the above paradigm. Heikkilä (1995), for instance, strongly emphasizes the student's self-steering, responsibility and constructive learning as the basis of teacher education. The same trend of development is clearly pointed out in the report of the evaluation group in the educational sciences (Educational studies and teacher education towards the future 1994). This is also the case in several other studies made by different units concerning their activities and views (Huttunen & Karkama 1995, Kohonen 1994, Korpinen 1995, Syrjälä 1994). In the most recent Finnish literature on teacher education, the emphasis has hence been on the teacher as a researcher of his/her own work and action research has been seen as an essential part of the teacher's professional skills. But what do we actually mean with these concepts and what is the significance of the research done by teachers?

"The teacher as a researcher" movement and action research in different countries

The idea of the teacher as a researcher has kept changing during the past forty years. The view on the teacher researching his/her own work has been sometimes rejected and sometimes accepted. In the global debate, there has been discussion over whether teachers can act as researchers or why we need researching teachers. Alternative names and new practices have been developed for the concept of "the teacher as a researcher". The terms "research", "action", "collaborative", "critical" and "inquiry" have been connected with each other and with the concept "teacher" in many different ways (Cochran-Smith & Lytle 1993, xiii).

The idea of the teacher as a researcher is mostly associated with the work of the English curriculum theorist Lawrence Stenhouse, who, together with his colleagues, developed democratic research in the university of East Anglia in the 1970's and inspired teachers to actively participate in all the phases of the research process concerning their work. The roots of action research date back to progressive pedagogy, especially Dewey's thinking and speeches. Action research had a notable status in the United States in the 1950's, and it began to gain new strength there in the early 1970's. Simultaneously, action research started to spread to many different countries, and it developed with different emphases, especially in Australia, Germany and Scandinavia. Today, the action research is a world-wide movement, which has a journal of its own and annual conferences.

The radical idea of Stenhouse was to help teachers to develop as self-reflective researchers and practitioners who could examine their own practice critically and systematically (Oja & Smulyan 1989, 8). He criticised the prevailing object model for the development of curriculum, which minimised the teacher's role as a developer, and emphasized the process model, which is based on the teachers' self-evaluation of what they consider important in the curriculum. Self-evaluation requires the teachers to have an ability to systematically reflect their own pedagogical activities. Action research supports and helps teachers in making wise solutions in the development of the curriculum. Stenhouse believed that reasoning on their own activities helps teachers to clarify and change the theories that guide their work and to make implicit theories become explicit. At the same time, teachers need to check whether their practice reflects the values they imagine and whether they understand what values the practice actually reflects. According to Stenhouse, the curriculum will not develop without the teachers' development. While developing the curricular plan as action research, the teachers develop themselves professionally at the same time.

John Elliott (1994) continued Stenhouse's work and supervised teachers who collaborated on developing inquiring learning in their classes. Today, he is heading a multinational development project on environmental education. The project is based on the action research done by teachers in schools. The results obtained over ten years show that action research has been an effective method of making changes in schools. The significance of the systematic reflection done by teachers turned out to be crucial. It was essential that favourable environments were created for the implementation of action research during the project. The starting point was the jointly developed frame of reference and supporting measures available to the participants.

In the German-speaking area, action research has developed rather independently and has had connections with the ideological, cultural and political contexts of the area. The development of action research has been unstable there, because, after the notable increase right after World War II, action research nearly disappeared from the practice. (Altrichter & Gstettner 1993). During the first wave, the nature of action research was markedly political and it was associated with the post-war protest movement of students. Similar forms of participatory action research, which have connections to the pedagogy of Freire, are gaining strength especially in Latin America (Torres 1992). In the German-speaking area, action research is also strengthening anew, being now more strongly connected to the Anglo-American tradition. More clearly than before, action research studies focus on the workers' and academic researchers' collaboration, which emphasizes the reflection done by the participants (Kelchtermans, Vandenberghe & Schratz 1994).

During the past few years, action research has been developed on the basis of the critical theory, especially in the university of Deakin in Australia (see also Kincheloe 1991). There, Carr and Kemmis (1986) analysed the theory of science underlying action research on the basis of Haberman's thoughts. Their starting point is that teachers as researchers have a special character and meaning. Education does not pertain only to individuals, but is a markedly social activity. Basically, education is very problematic. We need open and enlightened discussion on what the aims of the education are, what tools should be used in it, what kind of relations there are between different parties, etc. Action research should not be merely research of educational reality, but research that improves education. The basic idea of action research can be crystallized into two words: to improve and to involve. The essential principles concerning education are formed on the basis of ideologies and traditions. During an action research project, the practitioners try to free themselves from the factors that restrict their thinking and to become aware of the interests that are maintained by the present institutional education. Action research is guided by an emancipatory interest of knowledge, in other words, an aspiration to reach the most just possible life for all people. (Carr & Kemmis 1986, see also Räsänen 1993)

Most of the action researchers emphasize emancipation, i.e. the teachers' and the educators' emancipation from the authority of administration and researchers. On the other hand, the post-modern thinking doubts whether there ultimately can be true emancipation (Kemmis 1994). It is essential in action research to strengthen the educators' own "voice" so that it can be heard more clearly than before. There are also demands that the action research processes should be democratic to all the participants. Thus, the voice of the children should also be heard in a process of this kind, and they should be taken seriously as co-researchers.

In the recent discussion on action research, the emphasis has been on the collaboration between the teachers and the researchers (collaborative action research). In different parts of the world, networks of researching teachers are being formed, where the practitioners reflect their own work. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993, 8) use the concept "teacher research" instead of action research when they talk about research done by teachers which is targeted at their own work. They claim that research done by teachers is an approach or a process of change, where individuals and groups strive together to understand and change schools, day-care centres and other educational communities. This kind of research represents a new way of knowing, which should also be taken into consideration also in teacher education. With its help, the teachers' and pupils' way of constructing knowledge together can be made visible. At the same time, teachers are developing a new way of telling and writing about their work to their colleagues and their pupils.

In Finland, action research has become common in educational research and it has been accepted by university researchers, although there may still be some critical views of the teacher's status and meaning as a researcher. However, several doctoral dissertations with action research have already been accepted. In the departments of teacher education, many future teachers participate in action research studies by developing a curriculum for some specific situation. The transition to school-based curricula has meant an increase of an inquiring and researching touch in schools and the launching of many action research studies connected to curriculum development. In the teachers' preservice and inservice education, action research has also taken a form which tries, by reflecting together, to make changes either in the university or in the school. In a process of this kind, reflection and action are united, as are also theory and practice and research and teaching. It is possible to say that Finland is undergoing a reconstruction of the entire frame of reference in educational work, where the emphasis lies on the opinion of the human being as a person who is self-directed, aware of his own learning and also responsible for it. All the educators should get personal experiences to show that knowledge is not stable, but develops and can be formed together (Nurmi 1993). The development of education is a responsibility of us all, and the change has become part of the everyday life in different educational environments. Today, educators are looking for support for their research work from universities. The universities and the practical fields are finding each other in different joint projects, where there is an aspiration to work changes in the participants themselves and in different educational contexts. Today, there is an interest in authentic cases, whose understanding and description require collaboration between the teachers and the researchers and new skills from both of them.

Action research characteristics

Action research is advancing all around the world and it is accepted as research in many universities. In the same way, it has become a natural part of teacher education programmes, a form of inservice education and a way of implementing large, publicly funded projects (Noffke 1994). The concept of action research, however, involves many kinds of studies; some of them differ from each other only slightly, while in some others the aims and the results can be completely opposite. While discussing action research and considering the research targeted to the educators' own work, the research process itself should also be examined before we know what it is really about. On the other hand, there has been a lot of unnecessary debate within the movement about what right action research is, how it is done, who can participate and what should be the target. Zeichner (1994) warns against such unnecessary arguments, which do not promote the fundamental goal of action research, the improvement of more just and equal life.

Action research can be defined in many different ways by describing it as social action which tries to create changes and by emphasizing the essential aspects of the process, such as collaboration, reflection and participation. The most essential features of action research become clearly evident in the following definition.

> "Action research is a form of collective self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own social or educational practices, as well as their understanding of these practices and the situations in which these practices are carried out"
>
> (Kemmis & McTaggart 1988, 5)

Educators can carry out action research on a small scale by connecting it with their own work through conversations with their colleagues. Mostly, however, there is a group of teachers and educators who share a common interest in the development of their own work. Some of the action research studies are large projects funded by schools and governments.

The starting point is always some educational ideal, a goal to which the group is committed. Action research emphasizes the ethical nature of the teacher's work. During the process, one's own educational practices are compared to the ideal; ways to develop one's own action towards the ideal are discussed and experimented with in practice.

Action research proceeds cyclically, not linearly from the ideal to action. There are four elements that merge together: action, reflection, retrospection and prospection.

1) Research and action are united in action research in such a way that the practitioner is not given merely the role of a technician or an implementor in the process of renewal.

2) The roles of the teacher and the researcher are fused together in an action research process, so that the teachers and educators are no longer mere objects of research.

3) Action research changes the production and control of the knowledge concerning education, so that the knowledge of the educational process is not produced by outside experts, but by the educators themselves through their own action.

4) Action research emphasizes the contextual and social nature of change and criticises the previous strategy that focused on the significance of individual educators.

In practice, it is not easy for the teachers to do research. They have no time to think about their work. They are not used to talking about it with their colleagues or to collect data systematically and intentionally. For some teachers, however, writing has been a way to reflect their work, and the gathering of portfolios is starting in schools. Even though action research continues its triumph on academic arenas, its meaning in practical teaching work is still modest according to many writers. Even so, the literature emphasises that a reflective practitioner proceeds in his/her educational work like a researcher and that a lot of action research and teacher research of various standards is actually taking place. Carr and Kemmis (1986) state, however, that "participatory action research is NOT the thing social practitioners, academics and workers ordinarily do when they think about their work". Also, action research does NOT mean solving problems, but rather posing problems. It is NOT research where other people are researched, but research where people approach their own work. Action research is NOT a method of implementing certain external policies or a scientific method that can be adapted to social work, a method that would only try to interpret situations, like historical research, or to take the study subjects only as objects associated with things, like natural scientific research.

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) point out that research done by teachers is a particularly valuable approach, which differs from the other research on teaching. They think that teacher research does not consist of only empirical research, but also of conceptual research done by teachers, where the educators analyse the theoretical and philosophical foundations of their work. The writers divide teacher research into four categories.

1) Journals are teachers' reports of activities in class, e.g. portfolios. They can include accounts given by the teacher and analysis, reflection and interpretation of his/her own experiences.

2) Oral inquiries are perhaps the most invisible part of teacher research. In oral inquiries, at least two teachers participate in a systematic, analytic discussion about their work, reflection where they share experiences and check their own beliefs concerning their work. The starting points may be certain cases or concepts, metaphors and images concerning the participants' own education. Like in journals, the reports are usually directed only to those who participate in the same activity.

3) Classroom studies are the best known form of teacher research, and they also resemble most closely conventional university research. In classroom studies, the teacher-researchers plan together and implement research related to learning and education, reflect on their results and produce different reports (Compare Hopkins 1993). There is often a teacher network or a group working on reflective practice, where the teachers can question their own previous beliefs through critical reflection. They also try to examine the situations from different viewpoints, to find the hidden meanings in the phenomena and to understand the structural factors that have contributed to the situations (Adler 1993).

4) Essays that teachers write, mainly to their colleagues, to tell them about their experiences and the solutions they have arrived at. Essays that teachers have written about their work are quite rare, at least in Finland. Some journals, however, regularly publish short reports by teachers, and in this conference many teachers present such studies of their own work. Essays are often very personal, retrospective descriptions of the teacher's own work. In them, research means that experiences are selected, analysed and interpreted. The problem is that they are not very often added to the research done by other teachers, but nevertheless, they are valuable to the writer and to other educators, when they describe and try to conceptualize the everyday work of an individual teacher. Their meaning for university research is not so significant, however.

The principles of practical action research can be crystallized on the basis of an interesting collection by Altrichter (1993, see also McTaggart 1993b):

1. Action research is characterized by a confrontation of data from different perspectives
   - Collect also views other than your own.
   - Confront different perspectives on the same situation and use "discrepancies" as a starting point for the development of your practical theory.
   - Develop your research into a collaborative project
2. Action research is characterized by closely and iteratively linked reflection and action
   - Closely link action and reflection
   - Emphasize "iterativity" of research
3. Action research incorporates reflection and development of educational values
   - Never separate the question "How can I promote learning" from the question "What kind of learning am I promoting thereby?"
4. Action research is characterized by holistic, inclusive reflection
   - Instead of evaluating whether the given targets were achieved, try to find out what side effects were created and how you feel about the achieved results
5. Action research implies research and development of one's own self-concept and competence. During the process, the educator may feel anxious and insecure. That is why we need
   - Peer collaboration and consultation by "critical friends".
   - "Control of research" by the person directly affected by the situation under research.
   - Start small and develop your research gradually. To start small, to think big.
6. Action research is characterized by the introduction of individual findings into a critical professional discussion.
   - Participation in a professional discussion is a means of validating and developing the insights of individuals
   - The sharing of individual insights makes them accessible to the other professionals and broadens the knowledge base of the profession
   - Finally, the publication of accounts of reflective practice also means that the educational professionals get more say in the discussion about the future development of the educational system
   - It also means that the educational professionals are responsive to the public.

Significance of action research

The research done by teachers is a learning process for all the participants, which means a change in individual human beings and, above all, a cultural change in the whole researching community. To conclude my presentation, I will discuss briefly the meaning of action research for

1. professional development

2. as a strategy of change in school and in other educational institutions

3. as a production of new knowledge concerning education and learning

In many studies, the research done by teachers is considered to promote the teachers' professional development. In our own study (Lauriala & Syrjälä 1995), we examined the experiences of student teachers and experienced teachers had of the research they did, connecting it with alternative forms of pedagogy. In the project, some of the participants experimented with the principles of Open Education in the development of their own work. This was done according to action research principles. The project's goal was

- to advance the participants' collaborative skills
- to connect practical experiments with theoretical studies
- to widen and modify the participants' perspectives of school, learning, children and research, which serve as the basis of any critical assessment and renewal of their own work.

The participants experienced the project as significant for their own professional development. They appreciated especially the meaning of collaboration and reflection that was carried out jointly. The project increased the participants' belief in the teacher's possibilities to improve his/her own work. For novice teachers, the project meant an increase of self-confidence and support in finding their own identity as teachers. The research was considered to be demanding, but valuable and inspiring, and afterwards it was thought to be especially important for everyday teaching work.

Holly (1993), who has studied the meaning of teacher research for the professional development of teachers, emphasizes that teachers need support in doing research. At its best, research should support the teachers' and educators' professional development in three areas: ego maturity, moral/ethical growth and conceptual growth.

Action research is considered to be a significant strategy for change when there are aspirations to improve education and teaching in different communities. Grundy (1994) claims that the quality of education and learning does not become better because individual teachers and educators develop, but because the whole community, e.g. school or day-care centre, undergoes a process of change. Action research includes principles which should develop into natural approaches in the schools and educational environments striving at change. A change requires that the culture of the whole community changes, which can be achieved with the help of collective reflection connected to the process. While reflecting together, the participants try to understand and change three different aspects of the culture: language, interaction in the activity and the social relationships that define the activity (McTaggart 1991b).

An action research process is also meaningful when it produces new, shared information for the participants and other teachers. At the same time, it helps the participants to understand how information can be constructed together. For example, the composition of a school-based curriculum could proceed as a construction process for the researching community's own knowledge. However, teacher research can be significant in a broader sense than just for other teachers. It can change the educational knowledge basis created by the university, while it describes the everyday life of education in a manner that is not otherwise possible. Teachers may also ask questions that others never even come to think of. (Lytle & Cochran-Smith 1993)

Action research has also been strongly criticised, and Hodkinson's (1957) classical article already contains the most important claims that have also been presented later. Research does not belong to amateurs and teachers have no time or energy for it. The teachers' process of resolving problems together will not succeed in a school, unless there is a co-ordinator and a leader. Action research is not even scientific, because its results cannot be generalized, its methodology is defective and its connection to theory remains weak. The defenders, on the other hand, claim that holistic understanding is more important than statistical generalization, and that generalization is not only the researcher's problem, but also the reader's. While reading research, the reader must ask what it can contribute to his/her own situation and what it cannot. During the past years, the methodology of action research has developed notably, as has also other qualitative research, and its meaning as a producer of new theory has become clear-cut and important. The teacher-researchers are finding each other and the contacts with university researchers have been consolidated in different parts of the world. We need each other and we need different approaches in order to develop more just and equal education in the world.

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THE NEW INITIAL PROGRAMME FOR PRESCHOOL TEACHERS IN SLOVENIA

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Preschool institutions in Slovenia

The 70's and 80's witnessed a rapid growth of children attending preschool institutions. In these last years more than half of all preschool children between the ages of 1 and 7 years, in the period following the end of maternity leave until the child's entry to school, have been attending preschool institutions. The advantage of our early childhood education is that younger and older preschoolers are neither institutionally separated nor with regard to the system, and have the same preschool teachers working with them. One could say that Slovene preschool institutions operate in good material conditions, with professionally well-qualified early years teachers, yet having a drawback in limited variety and selectivity. Until recently no private kindergartens existed in Slovenia and only a negligible number of mostly very young children were included in private home care. All public preschool institutions follow the same formal curriculum. Due to a centralized leadership on the part of state advisors, the approaches and ways of work of early years teachers used to differ only slightly. In these last years, however, there has been an increase in diversity of preschool institutions and early years teachers. The proposed changes in the system itself offer possibilities for different programmes of state preschool institutions, as well as for the establishment of private kindergartens.

Parallel to the changes in the system of early years education, one can follow changes occurring in the initial training programme for early years teachers. Until 1991, the required qualification for the profession was a finished secondary school for early years teachers. Since then, the required qualification has been a finished 2-year higher education programme. The Faculty of Education in Ljubljana started educating early years teachers as early as 1984. In the fall of 1995 the present university programme will be replaced by a 3-year study programme as part of a professional institution of higher education, which is the result of changes in the whole vertical of the state school system. These are reflected in the changed conceptual solutions at all levels of education and in the proposals for a new school legislature.

The need for a changed programme is the result of the following facts:

1. The demand for higher education was expressed by numerous professionals and practitioners reflecting on the conditions necessary for sound work in early years education. At professional meetings, participants offered their views and standpoints about the existing programme and suggested additional contents in order to enable educators to become better equipped for the demanding work with preschool children. We managed to incorporate only some of these suggestions and minor changes into the existing programme, which has not brought about any substantial changes in the quality of the programme itself.

2. Early years teachers employed in preschool institutions completed different courses required for this profession (5-year secondary school, 4-year secondary school, higher education with various preceding secondary schools). Examinations of the results of various programmes showed deficiencies in quantity as well as in quality of such training and pointed out a need for a higher education programme for early years teachers.

3. The passing of the document Concept of Public Preschool Institutions (White Paper on Education in the Republic of Slovenia, 1995) has brought about conceptual changes for early years education. Greater plurality of programmes and an open curriculum require high professional standards, autonomy and responsibility on the part of the teachers. Demanding professional tasks and problems call for a well educated early years teacher with good theoretical and practical training. For the early years teacher the document foresees higher education.

4. The concept of compulsory education requires 9 years of compulsory education (now 8 years), with the child entering school one year earlier than before. It will be possible for the early years teacher to work alongside the classroom teacher in this new first grade. For this role both profiles have to be designed differently from now.

5. The Higher Education Acts, adopted at the end of 1993, abolished 2-year university programmes, among them programmes like ours for the education of early years teachers, and introduced programmes within the professional institutions of higher education, lasting 3 or 4 years.

Planning the initial study programme

Planning the initial study programme is part of a greater research project, including also the planning of other programmes such as: part-time education, specialization, additional programmes for graduates from other study programmes who wish to enter into early childhood education. The preparation and implementation will be followed by the evaluation of the same.

The starting points of the initial programme were the present-day situation and the vision of the development of early childhood education in Slovenia. A critical analysis of early years educational systems and systems of early years teacher education around the world was done. The comparative analysis included data about early years teacher education in 19 European countries, whereby special attention was paid to their duration, syllabus and the extent of pedagogical practice. The main findings of this analysis are:

- The majority of countries educates early years teachers at post-secondary level, i.e. following the minimum of twelve years schooling (primary and secondary). The studies last from two to four years and are carried out at universities, institutions of higher professional education or vocational schools. Education at secondary level was found in only two schools.
- Common to all educational programmes are professional studies, subject studies and teaching practice. According to our data the relationship between them varies, while during the time of the analysis some countries might already have changed their programmes. Professional studies take up 33 to 45 % of the whole programme. In the majority of countries teaching practice takes up 20 to 36 % of the programme. Countries with a lower percentage of teaching practice are Spain (14 %), Poland (15 %), and Slovenia (in the old programme 5 %). In Finland this percentage is much higher (47 %). The greatest differences exist in the share of subject studies, which extends from 18 % in Poland to 47 % in Norway.
- From country to country syllabuses differ to a greater extent than the level and duration of studies or the relationship between the professional, subject and practical part of the programme. The range extends from 8 (Germany) to 26 (the Netherlands) subject areas. There are also great differences in the kind of subjects.

The new initial programme has been created by subject directors of the existing higher education programme. On the basis of opinions about the extent of the programme, suggestions for changes and additions, we have designed a new programme and prepared curricula for individual subjects.

Students were also invited to cooperate in the preparation. In an anonymous inquiry they expressed their opinion about the extent of the programme and about individual subjects. They suggested some changes in the contents and in the organization of studies.

In the process of preparing the new programme, professional and other dilemmas had to be solved, the most relevant being:

- university or higher education programme,
- duration: 3- or 4-year programme,
- enrollment on the basis of matura or final examination,
- relationship between professionalisation and academic studies,
- relationship between professional studies, subject studies and teaching practice,
- should the early years teacher be equally proficient in all areas of educational work or should (s)he be enabled to develop his own preferences and special abilities,
- successive, integrated or concentrated teaching practice,
- relationship between lectures, seminars and exercises,
- which subjects should be offered at the beginning: professional studies or foundations for subject studies.

The proposal of the new programme was discussed at many levels. It was frequently discussed by the teachers of the existing programme running at the Faculty of Education in Ljubljana, Department for Early Years Education. Then it was presented to three independent experts, who deal with problems of early years education, teacher education and curricula. We also met with a group of practitioners - principals, pedagogues, psychologists and early years teachers. The proposal was then discussed at Univeristy Board, where its suitability in regard with the accepted criteria for higher education programmes was examined. Finally it was discussed by members of the Professional Council for Higher Education at the Ministry of Education and Sport. The programme was then verified and will be implemented in 1995/96 academic year.

Starting points for preparation of the programme and suggested changes

Numerous foreign and Slovene studies have shown that the early years teacher is the most influential factor contributing to the quality of early years education (School Based Inservice Education, 1993). Well educated early years teachers are professionally more competent and can decisively influence the quality of syllabuses, the contents of which are becoming less and less centrally defined around the world.

Due to a rapid development of science and increasing knowledge on the part of the children, it is impossible for the early years teacher to learn, in the course of studies, all he will later have to pass on to the children. It is therefore of greater importance that (s)he learns to search for and find information and knows how to impart it to the children. (S)he should above all be an all-around person, capable of constantly seeking and finding ways to acquire specific skills and knowledge needed for her/his work. It is unreasonable to expect her/him to be "universal", i.e. equally well versed in all areas of work. The new programme therefore gives space to a greater share of optional subjects, which enable individual students to become well equipped and qualified in those areas, wherein lie their special interests and abilities.

A tendency towards universality is still present in the conviction that early years teachers should alone be able to cope with all professional problems. To this end, they should in the process become acquainted with the various institutions and services for dealing with preschool children. The educational programme should not train early years teachers for work with children only, but also for communication with colleagues and other professionals, who can all help her/him to solve professional problems.

One of the essential changes from the old programme is a greater share of teaching practice. We believe that more teaching practice does not mean a step back into one-sided professionalisation of work, but rather the opposite. It happens that at the beginning of her/his career a graduate meets with a series of problems which he is unable to cope with because of lack of experience, thus coming to the conclusion that "theory is useless". And it is just this fact that leads to one-sided professionalisation, which is nothing but a non-critical imitation of processes of others. In the new programme we are therefore introducing the so-called integrated teaching practice, which will enable students to recognize the usefulness as well as limitations of acquired theoretical knowledge. With the help of theoretical reflection they can at the same time examine their own actions and actions of others. Next to more teaching practice, a necessary requirement for this is also an appropriate academic level of the programme, so that students can obtain sound theoretical knowledge.

Last but not least, we have slightly reduced the weekly student load, in order to enable students to dedicate more time as now to individual studies.

Aims of the new programme

The programme aims to educate and train early years teachers. The goal is to empower students to perform sound work with preschool children and with children in the first grade of primary school, as foreseen in the proposal of the new school legislature, and to work successfully with parents, colleagues and other experts. The early years teacher must know how to communicate with children as well as adults and must be able to critically analyze and evaluate her/his work.

In the process of education, the early years teachers should become acquainted with various concepts of childhood and early years education and acquire the basic theoretical and practical knowledge of individual educational areas. These are:

- **Child and education**: various concepts of childhood and education through history up to the present, various theories about the development and learning of preschool children. These are special topics in pedagogic (theory of education, early childhood pedagogic and didactic), psychology (developmental and pedagogic psychology), sociology, philosophy, special pedagogic and health education,
- **Theoretical and practical knowledge in specific educational areas** (language, movement, dance, music, art, social environment, science, and mathematics). The basis of this is sound knowledge of subjects the early years teacher will be passing on to the children. So-called methodologies are built up on the above, and here students learn different approaches and ways of imparting this body of knowledge to preschool children of different ages. The above mentioned areas are interconnected in content (syllabuses) and in performance (integration of areas in educational work).
- **System of child care** (school system, state and private institutions, legislative, social and health care institutions). It is important that the early years teacher becomes informed about the kind of services offered by various institutions assisting the family and preschool children and that (s)he learns how to contact them. A critical analysis of how these institutions function and the relationships existing within them should also be included. It is important that future early years teachers learn about **children's rights.**
- **Communication with children and adults**: oral communication, reading, written expression, non-verbal communication and expression through art. The student should learn how to talk (dialogue, group discussion) and speak freely (rhetoric), adapt her/his way of speaking to the listener (children of different ages, parents of different backgrounds, laymen and professionals...), to listen and consider the opinion of others. Students should be trained to study independently from professional literature (understanding, critical analysis and comparing with other sources) and to write professional articles.
- **Critical scientific thinking**: capacity of analytic way of thinking and thought synthesis, ability of professional argumentation and scientific criticism.

Contents of the new programme

The syllabus includes 21 compulsory subjects, 3 optional subjects and teaching practice. Subjects are divided into professional studies and subject studies. Professional studies take up 40 % of the syllabus, 31 % are subject studies, 8% optional subjects and 21% teaching practice. Next to all these, students have 120 hours of recreation and 180 hours of concentrated teaching practice.

Table 1. The syllabus of the 3-year study programme for early years teachers.

[illegible]	[illegible]	TEACHING PRACTICE	
[illegible]	[illegible]		
1. SLOVENE LANGUAGE	□_▲		
2. DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY	□⧉_	□▲	▼
3. PSYCHOLOGY OF EDUCATION	▼_	□▲	▼
4. THEORY OF EDUCATION AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION	□►_	◄_	▼
5. DIDACTIC AND MEDIA	⊻▲		
6. SPECIAL EDUCATION	▼_	□▲	▼
7. METHODOLOGY OF EDUCATION	▼_		
8. MOTOR DEVELOPMENT OF YOUNG CHILDREN	▼_	□▲	
9. HEALTH EDUCATION	▼_		▼
10. SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION	▼_		
11. PHILOSOPHY (SPECIAL TOPICS)			
[illegible]	[illegible]	◄_	
12. MOVEMENT EDUCATION AND SPORT	▼_	◄_	
13. DANCE EDUCATION	▼_	◄_	
14. MUSIC EDUCATION	▼_	◄_	
15. ART (DRAWING, PAINTING AND MODELLING)	▼_	◄_	
16. PUPPETRY, DRAMA AND FILM EDUCATION	▼_	◄_	
17. LANGUAGE EDUCATION (including children's literature)	□_▲	◄_	
18. SOCIAL WORLD OF CHILDREN	▼_	◄_	
19. TECHNICAL EDUCATION	▼_	◄_	
20. NATURAL SCIENCES (biology, chemistry and physics) IN EARLY YEARS	□_▲	□▲	◄_
21. MATHEMATICS	◄_	□▲	
[illegible]	[illegible]		
22. FIRST OPTIONAL SUBJECT (one of the subjects from 12 to 21)	▼_	◄_	
23. SECOND OPTIONAL SUBJECT (one of the subjects from 12 to 21)	▼_	◄_	

[redacted]		TEACHING PRACTICE	
24. THIRD OPTIONAL SUBJECT ☐ ENGLISH LANGUAGE ☐ COMMUNICATION SKILLS ☐ METHODOLOGY OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH ☐ SPECIAL EDUCATION	▾_		
[redacted]		▸8_	
TOTAL	88▴_		
PHYSICAL TRAINING (recreation)	□8_		
CONCENTRATED TEACHING PRACTICE	□▸_		

Early years education is distinctly an interdisciplinary field, where different sciences deal with the same phenomena and problems. In the programme, all professional subjects are interconnected, since education and the preschool child are the common denominator of all. These subjects also form the professional basis and starting points for specific subject studies where students add to their knowledge in different areas of science and art and become acquainted with the pedagogical principles and with the ways of imparting them to the children. On the other hand, all subjects in the group of subject studies also have to be interconnected. We believe that the early years teacher should in her/his activities be combining different subject areas, because children experience the world as a whole. The majority of professional subjects is planned at the beginning of studies, while there are more subjects of the group subject studies in the second and third study year. In the last year the students are offered those subjects, where the main aim is to trigger a critical reflection of acquired knowledge and of the early years education system (sociology, philosophy) and which demand of the students greater maturity. Optional subjects also appear in this final year, since the student must first know the foundations before being able to choose competently among them.

The aim of **integrated teaching practice** is to use the acquired theoretical knowledge in practical work and apply theoretical reflection of events in teaching practice. Hours planned for teaching practice are divided among subjects, so as to ensure better planning and right direction of teaching practice. Integrated teaching practice includes planned observation, analysis, demonstration hours in preschool institutions and field work. The aim of **concentrated teaching practice** in the second study year is to enable the student to familiarize himself with the kindergarten unit, kindergarten as a preschool institution, work of the early years teacher and problems connected with this work. (S)he can also try out her/his skills and knowledge acquired during her/his studies. During the teaching practice in the final year, the student more or less independently (under guidance) leads a unit and can see how well prepared (s)he is for the job. Teaching practice is carried out in preschool institutions chosen either by the student or by the programme director, in other institutions and as field practice.

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THE DART MENTOR TEACHER MODEL: TRAINING EARLY CHILDHOOD SUPERVISORS TO ASSIST BEGINNING TEACHERS

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Introduction

According to several recent studies (Carnegie Corp., 1994, Kontos, S., Howes, C., Shinn, M. & Galinsky, E., 1994, Whitebook, M., Howes, C. & Phillips, D. 1989), hundreds of thousands of young children across the country spend most of their waking hours in child care centers that actually diminish their intellectual and emotional development. This is due in large measure to the poor quality of child care center staffs. For the most part, there are minimum or no requirements or regulations governing competency of caregivers. To respond to this situation, The DART Center at Kean College was established in 1990 through the efforts of child care professionals in New Jersey who make up the Coalition of Infant/Toddler Educators *(CITE)* and the faculty in the Department of Early Childhood and Family Studies at Kean College, New Jersey, USA.

DART is a New Jersey statewide Center for Dissemination, Advocacy, Research and Training related to infants/toddlers, their families and providers of infant/toddler child care and family day care. DART evolved to answer the need in New Jersey for a central clearing house which could develop and deliver training to caregivers and supervisors of programs for children birth to three years; advocate for this population alone or with coalitions; disseminate information through meetings, video materials and books; and conduct related research. It includes a Board, a Director and ancillary staff including field trainers.

The DART Center Board devised an initial Trainer of Trainers model where a Master Trainer would implement a program based in social interaction theories. This proposal was funded by The Prudential Foundation, A. T. & T. Family Development Fund and The Schumann Fund for New Jersey to hire a director to conduct training for three years. The Director of the DART Center served as the Master Trainer in its initial year; Field Trainers (advanced early childhood educators) acted as mentors to the child care supervisors annually involved in the program. In this way, each year 12 child care or family child care supervisors participated in the training, each paired with a Field Trainer. Within the supervised field experience, the supervisors served as mentors to their own staff in their individual settings.

The DART Center model emphasizes the interpersonal world of the infant/toddler (Stern, 1985) and the relationship of thinking, acting and feeling. It stresses imagination and the creative process, birth to age three, and the center/child/family triad. It recognizes the vulnerabilities of very young children in centers and family day care homes, of children of teen parents, and of infants and toddlers at risk for one reason or another. It seeks to develop in child care workers and home care providers the understandings, skills and attitudes necessary to promote and /or encourage resilience in the very young and the ability "to meet the world on their own terms." (Werner, 1988) The above is predicated on the Board's overriding belief that:

> *We as human beings, to survive fruitfully, need to understand ourselves, others, the world. We have to learn to be comfortable with ambiguity, to risk finding answers that are appropriate and do not violate the integrity of other human beings. We choose to act, to find out, to be responsible for what we do, and so we are transformed.*

Procedure

During the three-year period 1991-1993, the director identified field trainers, centers and center supervisors and made the plan functional. Thirty-six supervisors took part in a comprehensive nine month program which included sixty (60) hours of seminars and twenty-five (25) hours of supervised field experience. Each supervisor was paired with a field trainer who was a master teacher. The master teacher/supervisor relationship included mentoring, coaching, and supervising and became a critical component of the DART model of training.

Classes were held every other week, while a supervised field experience followed in the alternate week. Classes were interactive seminars, and process oriented. Time was allowed for new ideas to be absorbed, new techniques to be practiced and for a mentor-supervisor relationship to grow.

Teaching strategies were devised to demonstrate how adults learn and what "best practice" in infant toddler education means.

Goal

The goal of this initial DART Training of Trainers program was to increase the quality of care for infants and toddlers through improving the competency of child care supervisors. Basically, their knowledge and skills would be enhanced and, in addition, they would learn to be teachers and mentors of their own caregiver staff.

There were four major objectives for training:

- To improve the effectiveness of center supervision through staff development.
- To improve the quality of caregiver/supervisor interactions.
- To improve the quality of adult/child interactions.
- To improve the overall quality of life in a center-based or family child care program.

Curriculum

The DART Center Model asserts that the character of life in infant-toddler centers increases positively as the entire staff, especially the supervisors and caregivers, base their program in an interactional model that respects the integrity of each participant. Interaction is a dynamic, complex, give and take affective dialogue leading toward higher competence for child *and* adult. Development occurs through transactions between infant/toddlers and caregivers that are reciprocal, mutually beneficial, enjoyable and acknowledged. The DART Center model recognizes that "infant education is thus more intense, more physical and more personal than preschool education..." (Cataldo, 1983) and that the psycho-social development of the child, the "affective dialogue" (Spitz, 1957) between young child and adult, is crucial to both concerned. For these reasons the DART Mentor Teacher curriculum model is composed of three interactive strands: infant/toddler-adult development; interactional processes of *signaling, reciprocity, synchrony, attunement and acknowledgment*; and clinical supervision/mentoring. These strands serve as linkages for transmitting training across all levels of staff.

It was hoped that the supervisors would gain the following understandings and concomitant skills:

- adult personality development and learning styles.
- infant/toddler child development and appropriate child care practices.
- clinical supervision processes
- quality relationships as defined by interactional processes which are discussed below.

Course Outline and Development

The program was presented in fourteen seminars and included the following topics:

- Introduction to the DART Training of Trainers Model
- Adult Development
- Using the Harms Clifford Environment Rating Scale
- Infant Development
- Interactional Processes
- The Caregiver as Curriculum
- Developing Primary Caregiving Systems
- Supervision and Mentoring including conducting effective staff development .
- Developing Creativity and Problem Solving Skills
- Promoting Effective Family Relationships

The seminar series began with understanding the concept of adult personality development through the use of the Myers-Briggs Personality Inventory (l977); stages of adult development and how adults learn best followed.

The next topic was assessment of the child care center environment. Supervisors were taught to use the Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale or the Family Day Care Rating Scale (Harms, Clifford and Cryer, 1990, 1989) and assessments were made of each child care site.

The child as learner followed and included infant/toddler child development, the caregiver as curriculum, primary caregiving, creativity and problem-solving, and the child and family.

The social-emotional life of the infant/toddler as defined in the interactional processes were identified and discussed throughout the seminars. Two specific seminars were targeted for in-depth discussion of this topic using video, role-playing and modeling.

Supervision, as the third major strand, was critical to the growth and development of competent caregivers. Three sessions were allocated to identify the stages of clinical supervision, provide case examples, and finally to practice through role playing the specific steps of the process. Special attention was given to ***dialogue*** as delineated by Makay and Gaw reported in Beatty (l976). The roots of ***mentorship*** are in this dialogue.

The dialogic communicator primarily aims at

(a) unconditional positive regard - valuing the worth of the other person to help him/her become what he/she can become as an individual,

(b) love--one is non manipulative, accepting of the other for who that person is,

(c) courage in communication - letting oneself actually be known,

(d) genuineness in self and image projection - not playing roles, rather developing oneself in accord with the authentic or actual self,

(e) accurate empathic response - ability to perceive the standpoint of the speaker, f) realistic communicative equality - each person views the other as unique and distinct persons, not as objects for manipulation or exploitation, and

(g) presentness - full involvement, one with the other taking the time to be easily accessible. (pp. 525-530)

Interactional Processes as the Theoretical Base

In the DART Model, interactional processes - signaling, reciprocity, synchrony, attunement and acknowledgment - form the base for the content development. Literature on interactional processes (Bateson, 1972, Brazelton, I974, Stern, I985 and others) defines these terms. Signaling is a process in which the caregiver is responsive to infant/toddler cues. Reciprocity is the give and take response of the caregiver to infant/toddler signals. Synchrony refers to the match of infant/caregiver patterns demonstrated in areas of sleep/feeding/vocalization/visual regard and touch. Attunement is described as the availability of the caregiver to enter into the baby's experience with pleasure and joy. Finally, acknowledgment is the positive verbal/nonverbal response of the caregiver to the infant/toddler. As a group, they provide the uniqueness for the model. When practiced holistically they create quality interactions among staff, adult/child and adult/family.

In centers where children as young as infants are housed in groups for longer than eight hours, quality interactions are crucial to overall mental health. In the DART model, Master Trainers promote these interactive processes in bi-weekly seminars; Field Trainers mirror them in their supervision sessions. Supervisors model them with their direct care staff, and in the case of family care providers, with their immediate children and families.

Clinical Supervision

Traditionally supervision is not systematically taught in early childhood training programs. Usually, the way we learn supervision is on the job experience unless we had a graduate emphasis in that area. We often mimic the supervision style we are most familiar with - critical judgment of behaviors. Too often teachers sum-up supervision in this way. My supervisor (director) comes in to observe me for an hour once or twice a year. Afterwards, she says to me "Let me tell you what you're doing wrong. Here's what you need to do" This in no way enables the practitioners to grow professionally or to model "best practice." What it does is deter growth, offering no practical application and creating poor relations between the supervisor and the supervisee.

For the DART model we adapted the Cogan (1973) approach to clinical supervision for social work professionals. With it we used the interactional processes to promote collaboration and a non-judgmental approach. In this process, five steps were completed by each clinical supervisory practitioner:

- Pre-conference meeting
- Observation
- Feedback analysis and strategy
- Supervision conference
- Post-conference analysis

In our program field trainers met every other week with their supervisor to work through problem areas or weaknesses evident in their supervision and identified together. This was a help in implementing in-service staff development. It was the intention of the DART Training Model to provide child development content, communication skills and support through this new model of supervision. Thus, we would assist in the professional development of the supervisor. The above was essentially accomplished through the mentor-staff person relationship. The Field Trainer served in this capacity by modeling the interactive processes and the clinical method of supervision. Through a non-judgmental support role, the Field Trainer guided the supervisor in transforming behaviors in the areas of communication, supervision style, and attitudes which typically impede effective supervision.

Mentoring as a Transformative Process

The concept of transformation is implicit in the mentoring relationship. The mentor's role enables and empowers the protégé to transform in a way which mediates the risks involved in the process. Mentoring as a helping relationship is a support system. It forms the basis for exploring greater independence from childhood insecurity and growth into adulthood, leading one to professional development. Apart from the mother/infant dynamic, the transactional process in the mentoring relationship may constitute a uniquely powerful force in adult life. In this transactional process, the adult's search for meaning allows for the realization of his/her own identity, and growth, and ultimately transforms the adult's personal and professional "self."

By engaging in dialogue, setting tasks and exercises, creating dichotomies, the mentor challenges the protégé and forces a situation of cognitive dissonance and reflection. The protégé is enabled and empowered by the experience, thus creating a new perspective and a new vision. Seeing the world through new eyes is a transformative process. Participants in the DART Mentor Teacher training experienced changes in the areas of: self-confidence in their supervisory growth, greater willingness to collaborate in their supervisor/staff interactions, improvement in the quality of supervisor/staff interactions, and an increase in their professional development due to transformation of their self-perceptions related to education.

Evaluation Study

In the third year of the project, funding was secured to conduct a qualitative evaluation of the training project by an outside source. The study was conducted in three parts: a) a process evaluation to document the effects of training on the participants and the classrooms they work in, b) policy and implications and c) outcome evaluation to make recommendations for improvement and to develop strategies to institutionalize the program. The results of the evaluation were overwhelmingly positive and presented specific recommendations related to future replication of this training model.

Process Evaluation

The DART Training of Trainers Model was conceived primarily to provide in-service to supervisory staff in infant/toddler centers and family child care where there was little specific training available. This was seen as a way of affecting change in the entire center through the subsequent training of caregivers by supervisors and through the development of a *mutual dialogue* between all adults and infants and toddlers in each setting. In the first two years of training unique features were emerging. By year three, the evaluation study indicated that the *mentor-teacher concept* was the most significant feature of the program, surpassing even the rigorous content base. Interviews and surveys conducted during the post training evaluation emphasized the strengths in the one to one formal relationship between the supervisor and her field trainer. Many connections developed between the pairs based on similar interests, utilization and growth of problem-solving and communication skills. Benchmarks in interactions showed behavioral changes in the areas of:

* improved communication skills
* improved content dissemination
* improved supervisor and staff interactions
* improved self-confidence in supervisory skills

The greatest testimony comes from the participants themselves. Project participants offered statements regarding the impact on their level of personal and professional development of skills, understandings and attitudes.

> "The most important thing about DART was that it gave me confidence as a supervisor. I know I can deal with staff conflicts now."
>
> "The strength of the program is the personal contact between the supervisor, field trainer, and Master Trainer. It's like three people working together on a project."

Statements reflected movement from supervisor to caregivers and changes in caregiver behavior with children as reported by supervisors.

> "More attention is paid to the children during free play, bathroom time and when the children are on the sliding board."
>
> "The one significant thing that I am proud to report is how my caregivers now respond to the children's signaling. They now give a verbal response to all cries, frets, yells, etc. They are also much more attentive to each child and his/her specific needs, so that no child is ever left out of a particular activity."
>
> "There is more verbal interaction. The children are given more time to express their needs. In the past, the caregiver would respond before allowing the child to ask. The caregivers have also tried to be more open to new ideas and to be more creative in the activities for the children."
>
> "I think there have been many subtle changes in the daily interactions with children. We've spent time discussing our interactions (i.e. quality times). I think through this process; we have a heightened awareness of the quality of our interactions. I've noticed change in key quality times like diapering. I've noticed caregivers genuinely interacting with the children during these times."

Policy and Implementation

Under policy and implementation, the evaluation study discussed the DART Training in the context of other similar programs throughout the United States. DART was identified as one of fifteen mentor teacher programs in the country. Three recommendations emerged informing policy: articulated credit, formal matching process for Mentors and Mentees, and broadening the auspices to include collaborating organizations.

Offering college credit is perceived as an asset and a means of helping participants advance within the field. Developing a formal matching process based on specified criteria will clarify the initial process of individual entry into a long-term relationship. Other policy issues related to developing a credential for participants of the training and/or additional compensation for the participants. These features would improve the quality of child care and advance the participants professionally. By collaborating with several organizations the evaluators agreed that there is greater success in attracting different funding sources including longer term funding.

Outcome Evaluation

Outcome evaluation emerged in part from the policy recommendations as well as from articulation with the director:

- Provide college credit for training.
- Develop a formal matching process for mentors and mentees to maintain the efficiency of the training.
- Document training curriculum in a manual including goals of the DART Training, the philosophy and teaching style of the project, an overview of the curriculum, a summary of each seminar with objectives, main points to be covered, activities/small group ideas, materials, and reading assignments.
- Document roles and responsibilities of participants, written qualifications and job description for field trainers and Master Trainer.
- Formalize participant selection process.

Lessons Learned

DART must now become a more formal institutionalized program without losing its sensitivities and person to person commitments based in its interactional processes and mentorship that has been its strength. Training is much needed in the areas DART stresses. Since the 1991-1993 pilot study, two replication models have been conducted. There is now more focus on the DART Mentor Teacher concept. The strength of the relationships between master teacher/ supervisor and supervisor/caregiver promotes powerful changes in adult behaviors as well as supports and often sustains the novice teacher.

One value of the pilot study was to identify the characteristic features of an in-service staff development model in early care and education. The struggle to refine format, content, delivery methods and relationship issues will continue as we move on. We have modified initial conceptualization over the three years to reflect the perceived needs of the participants and will continue to do so as we *dialogue*. For this reason we believe that the program is fresh, rigorous and genuine in its attempt to provide opportunities for both supervisors and practitioners to gain clarity, initiate reflective practices, and engage in collegial supervision and a mentoring support system.

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INTERDISCIPLINARY EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION TEACHER CERTIFICATION

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This review deals with (a) the *development* of interdisciplinary early childhood education teacher certification requirements in the state of Kentucky, USA; (b) the *process* for obtaining early childhood teacher certification in Kentucky; and (c) a *comparison* of Kentucky's interdisciplinary early childhood teacher certification standards to proposed USA national advanced early childhood generalist teacher standards .

Development

Early childhood teacher certification became an issue in Kentucky in 1986. At that time federal law (Public Law 99-457) regarding the education of children with disabilities gave responsibility for services to children younger than kindergarten age to public school districts. In 1990 the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA, Kentucky House Bill 940) provided for preschool education programs for four year old children in Kentucky. KERA made provision for the preschool education of children who are considered at risk for educational failure based on family income.

At the same time, KERA prohibited the replacement of existing federal programs for young children. Headstart, for example, is a federally funded early childhood program, that provides services to three and four year old children in Kentucky. State and federal programs, such as First Steps, Kentucky's early intervention system, also provide services for infants and toddlers (birth to three years of age) with disabilities.

KERA created the Education Professional Standards Board to establish requirements for obtaining and maintaining teacher certification. That Board decided to license education professionals in Kentucky who work with children birth to primary school through the Kentucky Department of Education Teacher Certification Office. Called the Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education (IECE) Teacher Certification, that license embraces children with and without disabilities. The Kentucky Administrative Regulation (704 KAR 20:084, Section 4) states: "Persons holding this certification shall serve as primary developers and implementers of individual programs for children with and without disabilities including Individual Education Plans and Individual Family Service Plans with consultation and support from specialists (e.g., speech-language pathologists, occupational and physical therapists, nurses, and educators of the hearing impaired or vision impaired) according to the needs of the child."

The new teacher license for IECE teacher certification does not qualify holders to teach in primary school (Burruss & Fairchild, 1993). Primary school in Kentucky includes what was formerly called kindergarten, first grade, second grade, and third grade. Primary school teacher licensure in Kentucky provides for general education teachers and special education teachers. Special Education teachers provide direct instruction to students with special needs and technical assistant to general classroom teachers. Special educators may serve as a member of a teaching team and/or may serve as a consultant.

When the new IECE licensure was proposed, concerns were voiced. Private-for-profit child care providers and private kindergarten directors feared that revenue would be lost when paying clients transferred their children to free public schools. Others were concerned that the inclusion of infants and toddlers, 0-3 years of age, would be intrusive to families and inappropriate for schools. Senior personnel in some early childhood education programs feared they would lose their jobs to young, inexperienced, but licensed job applicants. Consequently, the idea of a new teacher licensure for pre-primary personnel produced many questions and misconceptions

In the spring of 1994, a state regulation providing for the new IECE license was passed but short lived. An abbreviated version was passed February 9, 1995. The new regulation (704 KAR 20:084) created the IECE license; but in contrast to the first regulation, neither specifies who will be required to hold the license nor a timeline for requirement. Requirement by state and federal programs for at least a licensed head/lead teacher is assumed. Hopes are long standing that the existence of a license will (1) elevate the profession; (2) enhance the status of early childhood educators, caregivers, and interventionists; and (3) increase wages. Such improvements would lead to the more important goal of increased quality services to children and families. By 1992 every school district in Kentucky was required to provide early childhood education for qualifying four year old children. Kentucky law (Kentucky Revised Statute 157.226) reaffirming federal requirements (Public Law 99-457) stipulated that, at the beginning of the 1992-1993 school year, any three-five year old child with a disability was eligible for free and appropriate education. Teaching positions in the new early childhood programs were filled by persons holding teacher certification in other fields, and by persons holding bachelor degrees in fields related to early childhood education (e.g., child development and speech therapy).

Process

In the spring of 1995, twelve hundred persons expressed a desire for the new early childhood teacher license by applying for participation in a testing exercise. The following is a description of the process for obtaining the IECE teacher license.

The applicant for the Professional Certificate for Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education, Birth to Primary, (for certification standards, see *Appendix A*) will complete a bachelor's degree - and the approved program of preparation for this license - at a teacher education institution recognized by the Kentucky Education Professional Standards Board. In addition, the applicant is required to complete written tests and a one-year internship (704 KAR 20:084, Section 2).

Approved Program Standards

The state regulation sets forth four standards for an approved program of preparation.

1. The program shall be designed to prepare candidates to teach and manage tasks identified in the IECE Teacher Standards.
2. The programs shall include a system of continuous assessment to evaluate the candidate's progress and level of attainment on the teacher standards. The assessment shall include performance on authentic teaching and managing tasks in settings that are inclusive of children across abilities and contexts.
3. The program shall ensure the recruitment and retention of candidates from culturally diverse backgrounds.
4. The program shall provide knowledge and experiences with children from culturally diverse backgrounds.

Approved Program - Continuous Assessment

The continuous assessment required in an approved teacher preparation program calls for traditional paper and pencil testing, evaluation of products, and performance tasks. The products are to be organized into a portfolio (KDE, 1995a). The purpose of the products portfolio is to document the candidate's basic skills in educating young children. Items included in the portfolio must be the candidate's original work, must respect the confidentiality of children and their families, must reflect standard English written communication, and must be of a size that promotes readability and portability. Items should be included on the basis of quality, not quantity. Task entries must address cumulatively all interdisciplinary early childhood teacher standards (*Appendix A*), all age groups covered in the standards (infant/toddlers, preschoolers, kindergartners), all key learning contexts or settings (classroom/large group, individual/small group, parent-child dyads) and all key diversity factors (cultural difference, mild and moderate disabilities, and severe disabilities).

In addition to the task entries, standard sections of the portfolio might include:

1. *Candidate Information* - such as name, social security number, address, baccalaureate degree information (date, institution, program), test dates and scores;
2. *Table of Contents*;
3. *Statement of Completion* - documented verification by the candidate and a supervisor that the portfolio is original work; and
4. *Letter to the Reviewer* - a statement that identifies each entry by title and description, provides a rationale for entry selection, and that identifies the teacher standard or standards addressed, age group, setting and diversity factors addressed.

Suggested portfolio products are:

1. Products related to *program operation* - lesson plans, curriculum plans, daily schedules, space designs, materials inventory, program evaluation documents, evaluation documents created by supervisors.
2. Products related to *individual children* - a sample child portfolio, child observations, homevisit lesson plan, developmental history, referral for special services documentation, assessment reports, individual education plan, family service plan.
3. Products related to *collaboration* - parent communications, interdisciplinary plans, professional team plans and evaluations.

4. Products related to professional development - a personal resume, professional training documents, and philosophy statements.

Performance tasks are validated through observation documentation or video tape reviewed by peers, parents, colleagues, supervisors, program evaluators, or others. Performance tasks include activities such as direct instruction or learning facilitation, parent meetings, and professional team meetings. Other assessment activities might include an oral defense of the portfolio, teaching critic of self or others, and professional presentations.

Testing

The written testing requirements after the completion of an approved teacher preparation program include the Core Battery test of the National Teachers Examination and a test of knowledge, developed for use in Kentucky, and specific to interdisciplinary early childhood education. The Core Battery has three parts: Communication Skills, General Knowledge, and Professional Education Knowledge. Minimum passing scores are identified for each part.

The Kentucky Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Specialty Exam tests knowledge in five areas (KDE, 1995b; see *Appendix B*). The test format is multiple-choice questions. Thirty percent of the questions are related to typical child development, thirty percent to atypical child development, twenty percent to professional knowledge supporting child learning and development, ten percent to social foundations of interdisciplinary early childhood education, and ten percent to historical/legal foundations of interdisciplinary early childhood education.

Upon successful completion of a degree program, an approved program of preparation, and both series of tests, the candidates will be issued a statement of eligibility for employment. The candidate is responsible for securing employment. Upon the candidate's confirmation of employment in a position teaching children in a pre- primary program which meets specified criteria, the candidate is issued a one year license for the beginning teacher internship. Upon successful completion of the internship the Kentucky IECE Certificate (license) will be issued to the teacher.

Comparison

The concept of a national certificate offered by a board of education professionals has been considered, one that recognizes advanced knowledge skills, and dispositions in early childhood education. A draft document was prepared and sent out for evaluation. The remainder of this review compares the proposed national standards to Kentucky standards.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards drafted standards for the advanced certification of Early Childhood (ages 3-8)/Generalist teachers in 1994 (see *Appendix C*). Those standards were developed by a committee composed of outstanding teachers, scholars, and other experts in the field, all of whom had been appointed by the National Board (Woodall, et al, 1994). The advanced certification plan, if accepted by the teaching profession, would provide a nationally recognized credential for early childhood educators.

In 1994, National Board of Professional Teaching Standards asked Kentucky's Debbie Schumacher (Director, Division of Preschool Programs, Kentucky Department of Education) to analyze the drafted standards. Schumacher's response pointed out similarities between the National Boards drafted "Early Childhood/Generalist" standards and the new teacher standards contained in the Kentucky Administrative Regulation for Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Educators. She also noted differing assumptions between the state and national standards, and graphically displayed key differences.

The similarities identified by Schumacher were: (a) areas addressed are much the same although organized differently; (b) both standards emphasize child development, developmentally appropriate practice, collaboration, families, multicultural issues; and (c) Kentucky early childhood educators will have training and experience that prepare them for the pursuit of national recognition.

The differences in assumptions noted by Schumacher have to do with the identity, roles, and responsibilities of the early childhood educator. National standards assume a traditional classroom teacher for children in preschool and early elementary school, a role more consistent with primary school teachers in Kentucky (Burruss & Fairchild, 1993). In the Kentucky IECE model, the teacher's role is broader and is more consistent with that of the child development expert who serves infants and young children wherever they are. The Kentucky early childhood educator is trained to support the learning and development of infants and toddlers including those at risk of or with developmental delays. Training includes family education and parent-child models. In addition Kentucky early childhood educators function as an itinerant mentor to paraprofessionals in preschool or day care settings.

Table 1. Key Differences (according to Schumacher).

ISSUE	NATIONAL	KENTUCKY
Purpose	Voluntary standards for a small group of experienced teachers	Minimum for all new teachers as entry into the profession
Age of children	3-8 years	0-5 years (birth to primary including kindergarten where separate from primary)
Setting	Classroom	Classroom, centers, home-based, parent-child, itinerant, etc.
Types of children	Mainstream classroom with diversity	All (at risk of or with developmental delays and disabilities, special needs of all types, exceptional abilities

Conclusion

This review has focused on the evolution of Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education teacher certification in one state in the USA, the state of Kentucky. Looking back over the last decade, one becomes aware of many changes, some made in the face of seemingly insurmountable obstacles. Nonetheless, teacher educators across the state have come together with a new commitment and desire to meet the needs of children and families through the preparation of dedicated, knowledgeable, skilled early childhood teachers.

A national movement toward national certification, however, has some what different perspective regarding standards for early childhood educators. And, it is the opinion of this writer, based on the above review, that the national standards strong emphasis on classroom teaching and academic disciplines in early elementary teacher training results is inadequate training for educators who serve infants, toddlers, and preschool children. A limited comparison of these perspectives was presented above. Early Childhood Teacher Education continues to develop in the USA at both state and national levels, making for exciting times.

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Appendix A

IECE Teacher Standards
(704 KAR 20:084, Section 9)

Teacher Standard I. The early childhood educator shall design and organize learning environments, experiences, and instruction that address the developmental needs of infants, toddlers, preschool children, and kindergarten children and Kentucky Education Reform Act goals.

These KERA goals: (a) expectations of high levels of achievement for all students; (b) development of student ability to use basic communication and mathematics skills, application of core concepts and principles from academic disciplines to situations encountered throughout life; self sufficiency; responsible group membership and community service; problems solution, and integration of knowledge and acquisition of new knowledge; (c) increased school attendance; (d) reduced student dropout and retention rates; (e) reduced physical and mental health barriers to learning; and (f) successful transition to work, post-secondary education, and the military.

The early childhood educator shall develop plans: (a) for implementation in a classroom setting; (b) for implementation in a home or other settings: (c) for implementation by teaching assistants and other staff in a variety of settings; and (d) or training teaching assistants, other staff, and parents. These plans shall include individual family service plans, individual education programs, and transition plans for children across disabilities developed in partnership with family members.

Teacher Standard II. The early childhood educator shall create appropriate learning environments for infants, toddlers, preschool children, and kindergarten children that are supportive of developmental needs of the age group and state goals. The early childhood educator shall provide developmental and learning activities in classroom and home settings, and in other settings, such as other preschools, child care programs, and hospitals. Within these settings, the learning context may include individual child activities, parent-child activities, small groups of children, and large groups of children. The early childhood educator shall create appropriate learning environments for children with diverse abilities including children with and without disabilities.

Teacher Standard III. The early childhood educator shall introduce, implement, facilitate, and manage development and learning for all age levels, all settings or contexts, and all key diversity factors.

Teacher Standard IV. The early childhood educator shall assess children's cognitive, emotional, social, communicative, adaptive, and physical development, organize assessment information; and communicate the results appropriate to the purpose of the assessment. Assessment purposes shall include: (a) determining learning results; (b) developmental screening;

(c) program planning; (d) eligibility for disability services; (e) program evaluation; (f) progress on individual education and family service plans; and (g) needs for transition to the next educational setting or program.

Teacher Standard V. The early childhood educator shall reflect on and evaluate teaching and learning situations, learning environments, and programs including learning situations and programs provided by assistants and family.

Teacher Standard VI. The early childhood educator shall collaborate and consult with staff, volunteers, families, primary caregivers, interagency and interdisciplinary teams, and local, state, and federal agencies to design, implement, and support learning programs for children.

Teacher Standard VII. The early childhood educator shall engage in self evaluation of teaching and management skills and participate in professional development to improve performance.

Teacher Standard VIII. The early childhood educator shall support and promote the self-sufficiency of families as they care for and provide safe, healthy, stimulating, and nurturing environments for young children.

Appendix B

This outline is an example of the preparation information given to test participants.

I. Typical Child Development

A. Physical Development
B. Emotional Development
C. Cognitive Development
D. Social and Play Development
E. Language/Communication Development

How do young children typically develop in these areas, prenatally through early elementary ages? What are the milestones (scope and sequence) of normal development and learning?

II. Atypical Child Development

A. Biological and Environmental Risks
B. Cognitive and Processing Problems and Disabilities
C. Physical and Health Impairments
D. Hearing Impairments
E. Visual Impairments
F. Social/Emotional Delays and Disabilities
G. Communication Delays and Disabilities

What kinds of problems occur in typical development? How do specific disabilities and other developmental problems affect learning?

III. Professional Knowledge Supporting Child Learning and Development

A. Theories of Development and Learning

What are the major theories about child development and the principles of how children learn?

B. Foundations of Assessment of Child Development

What are key principles for evaluating a child's development and interpreting delays and difficulties?

C. Principles of Curriculum and Instruction, Based on Child Development and Learning

What are the principles and educational implications for the major theories?

IV. Social Foundations and Principles of Families Affecting Child Development

What societal and family conditions affect how children develop and learn?

V. Historical/Legal Foundations of Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education

A. Special Education

What are the major principles found in federal special education requirements?

B. Early Childhood Education

What are the major federal sources and principles of early childhood programs?

C. Early Childhood special Education

What are the major sources and federal principles of programs for young children with disabilities?

D. Kentucky Law and Policy

What are the major state rules and agencies dealing with the education of young children?

Appendix C

Standards drafted by the National Board for Advanced Certification of Early Childhood/Generalist teachers

I. Understanding Young Children

Teachers use their knowledge of child development and their relationships with children and families to understand their students as individuals and to plan in response to their unique needs and potentials.

II. Promoting Child Development

Teachers organize the learning environment to promote their students' physical social, emotional, linguistic, artistic, intellectual and cognitive development.

III. Knowledge of Subject Matter

Based on their knowledge of academic subjects and how young children learn, teachers design and implement developmentally appropriate learning experiences within and across disciplines.

IV. Multiple Teaching Strategies

Teachers use a variety of methods to promote individual development, meaningful learning and group functioning.

V. Assessment

Teachers continually monitor students' work and behavior and analyze this information to improve their work with children and parents.

VI. Reflective Practice

Teachers regularly analyze, evaluate and strengthen the quality and effectiveness of their work.

VII. Family Partnerships

Teachers work with and through parents and families to support children's learning and development.

VIII. Collaboration with Colleagues

Teachers work with colleagues to improve programs and practices for young children and their families.

SITUATED LEARNING IN KINDERGARTEN TEACHER EDUCATION

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Introduction

Learning has often been studied as an individualistic phenomenon. The traditional approach of expertise research has described the development of expertise almost exclusively as the development of a person's abilities or aptitudes. Research has shown that experts have a much larger and more structured knowledge base than novices from which to draw solutions, for instance, in playing chess, interpreting x-rays, analyzing computer programs, or teaching (e.g. Berliner 1992, Chase & Simon 1973, de Groot 1965, Leinhardt & Greeno 1986, Lesgold et al. 1988, Soloway et al. 1988). The qualitative differences between expert and novice performance have been interpreted to be closely related to the structure and quality of expert and novice knowledge (Glaser 1992).

A more recent approach in the study of learning describes it as an interactive process. Learning is seen to take place in the participation framework, between the person and his/her environment, rather than in the individual mind (e.g. Lave & Wenger 1991). Theories emphasizing the role of interaction in learning originate from the socio-cultural theories of learning (Vygotsky 1978). According to this theoretical perspective, learning is socially and culturally embedded (Rogoff 1990; Wertsch 1991). Learning and thinking are social constructs. What is mediated in a learning interaction is not only the content of learning, but also the processes. (McGuinness 1993, 312)

Despite recent emphasis on the significance of the environment, more exact studies are needed on the essence of social and the mediated influence of the situational aspects of environment.

Only little empirical research is available on the interplay between person and context in the learning process. From an earlier study (Karila & Ropo 1994) I have come to the conclusion that the dynamic interaction between persons' expectations and the culture of the environment is a significant factor in the learning process. Active interaction with the environment is particularly important when a person's conceptions and knowledge structures undergo major qualitative change. The nature of interaction between a person and the environment is related to the direction and speed of development of expertise.

The purpose of the present study is to examine the construction and development of expertise as a situational and contextual process with the learning environment forming the arena and a "partner" for individual learning and development. I am specifically interested in the interactive processes that mediate situational aspects to the characteristics of expertise.

Methods

The essential method springs from the grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss 1967; Strauss & Corbin 1991). A grounded theory is one that is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents (Strauss & Corbin 1990, 23). The analyses were made qualitatively according to this method. Lack of earlier empirical research caused the analysis to focus on formulating inductive theories of the research problem.

The subjects (n=9) were student teachers in a college for kindergarten teachers. The data were gathered 1991-1994 when the kindergarten teacher education had independent institutional status as a college. Nowadays, the education is located at the University of Tampere in the Department of Teacher Education. All the subjects were female. Their development was followed for three academic years. The data are both individual and environmental. The individual data were gathered using four different methods, namely, observations and video recordings of the subjects' instruction sessions during their practice periods in the kindergartens, interviews with the students before and after the instruction sessions, and interviews with the students several times during their education at the college. All the interviews were tape recorded and transcribed. The students also kept diaries during the practice periods. The data concerning the environment consist of the written documents (laws, curricula, schedules of learning etc.), supervisors' evaluations and interviews with the supervisors as well with the students, and observation of physical environment.

Preliminary findings

The study suggests that the development process of expertise during teacher education can be described as a continuum of situational learning experiences. The situational experiences are constructed in the interaction process between the learner and her learning environment. The situational learning experiences form some kind of path for the development process. The data show that the path develops according to the characteristics of the interaction partners as well as to the nature of the interaction. The nature and the development of the path seemed to be significant for the quality and content of learning.

In this paper I will describe some of the characteristics of the interaction partners namely the student teachers and the learning environment. I will also present some examples of the interaction.

The students' practice periods in the training kindergartens proved highly significant as regards the direction of the learning process. These periods formed a fairly concrete arena for encounters with interaction partners. I will therefore focus on the situational learning experiences the students had during their practice periods.

The learning environment

In the literature the concept *learning environment* has been used in various meanings. Here learning environment includes social and physical elements: interaction with other persons, individual and shared conceptions about the children, pre-school education, practices etc. are interpreted as social elements of the environment, with schedules, rooms, different kinds of organizations and different kinds of groups etc. interpreted as physical elements of the environment.

The data suggests that social and physical elements in the environment are closely related to each other. With both of these appearing in the educational practices the student teachers were involved in. Tyre and Hippel (1993, 2) have emphasized the significance of physical settings. They have stated that learning is *situated* in the sense that *where* learning takes place (and not just who is talking to whom) matters. The preliminary findings of my study partly confirm this conception. The social elements seem to be more determinant than the physical elements. Furthermore, the sense of the physical elements can be understood by means of the social elements. Even if it is sometimes very difficult to separate the social and physical elements of the environment, I believe that even the attempt to do so provides more information concerning the learning process and the interaction between the person and the environment

The overall organization of learning

The students' learning environment consisted of both the world of work (the kindergartens) and of the world of college. This arrangement offered the students opportunities to consider the important issues of pre-school education in two different settings.

The students' progress was based on the alternation of these two worlds. The students practiced in the kindergarten four times in their education. The duration of each period was about five weeks. The kindergartens were ordinary public kindergartens and the supervisors were ordinary kindergarten teachers. At the college the students were given supervision during practice periods from teachers who were kindergarten teachers themselves, and also from specialists in the general methods of early education. They visited the training kindergartens about once or twice during each period observing the students and discussing with them. The students also wrote pedagogical diaries which were important document for the supervisors at the college. Due to the terms of employment the other teachers at the college (lecturers of psychology, social studies, music, sport, art, literature etc.) were not able to give supervision for the students in the training kindergartens. Their teaching load consisted only of lessons, seminars and groupworks at the college. The teachers disliked this kind of arrangement because it seemed to confirm the separation of theory and practice.

The characteristics of learning environment

The two parts of the environment differed. The differences were related both to the nature of the activity (work/learning) and to the conceptions of pre-school education. Both environments were heterogeneous. In addition, the culture (conceptions of education and educational practices based on these conceptions) of the two locations seemed to be in the process of change. Because of the differences and transition processes the most obvious characteristics in the environment were instability and transition.

The data show that the development of expertise is clearly a situational process. As mentioned earlier learning environment consists of physical and social elements. The rooms and the furnishing in the training kindergartens were quite similar. This is easily understood because most of the kindergartens in Finland were built after 1973 (when the Day Care Law was passed) at which time the construction of the kindergartens and other public buildings was regulated by the central administration. Also, the size of groups and the number and the educational level of the staff in each group was regulated. Despite the external similarity of the rooms, the groups and the staff they seemed to form quite dissimilar learning environment for the students. The data reveal that the significance of the physical settings is closely related to the pedagogical and working culture and, at a concrete level, to the educational practices of the training kindergartens.

The actual discourse of the domain at any one time seemed to form the broader, social frame for the development process. At the time the data were gathered the key topics in pre-school education discussed in Finland were the "teacher as researcher" approach and the "child centered" approach. The first topic appeared mainly at the colleges.

The second topic was in evidence both at the kindergartens and at the kindergarten teacher colleges. This "child centered" topic is a descriptive example of the interaction process, and therefore I will present some data of it.

Situated learning and child-centered education

The college teachers seemed to be more eager to develop new kindergarten practices, especially from the point of view of child centered pre-school education. This approach apparently created interest in kindergartens, too, but only a few of them implemented this in educational practice. The educational practices in the kindergartens in which the students did their training seemed to be in a process of change. One of the most obvious characteristics of the change was the transition from the adult centered professional practices towards the child centered approach. The supervisors differed as to whether they emphasized child centered or teacher centered pedagogical practice.

The college supervisors expected the trainee to apply the child centered approach. Due to the lack of tradition of child centered practice within kindergartens the students had only incidental opportunities to observe more experienced teachers carrying out the educational practices based on child centered approach namely on the developmental level and the interests of children. In some cases the supervisors in the kindergartens could not accept this kind of approach and the trainees were not allowed to use it.

There seemed to be so many different interpretations of child centered pre-school education in the learning environment that students did not know exactly what they were expected to do.

These different approaches and interpretations naturally caused some problems for students' learning situations. Next example describes problems the students had while organizing instruction sessions according child centered approach. Among the college teachers the idea of child centered pre-school education was interpreted so that instruction should usually be organized in small groups (2-10 children). This was also the precept the students tried to follow. At the kindergartens there was a lot of variation in ways of organizing activities for children. For example, some of the kindergartens stressed the right of every child to be provided with equal opportunities and experiences during the kindergarten day. In this kind of educational culture the student teachers were not allowed to organize different kinds of activities for different children, but were expected to organize the same activities many times per day if they wanted to work with small groups. It did not matter if the activities were not suitable for every child.

On the other hand some of the trainers were eager to study child centered educational practices together with the students. The culture of the kindergarten was thus mediated to the students' developing expertise by the professional practices they were allowed to carry out.

Child centered education is very demanding for the teacher. It demands a good knowledge of childrens' development and powers of observation. Naturally, the students' knowledge of children was in the process of formation. They were just learning how children think and act in different situations and at different ages.

In a way the trainees were charged with developing quite new educational practices. In this kind of situation it is important how students can manage with the demands of the environment.

Situated learning and the profession of kindergarten teacher

The differences between the college and the training kindergartens concerning the nature of the activity were obvious during the last practice period of the students. They were closely related to different conceptions about the profession of kindergarten teacher, especially to the conception of the development process during the professional career. The students felt that most of their supervisors in the kindergartens expected too much maturity. The students themselves as well as their supervisors at the college perceived the last training period clearly as a learning situation. The difference between the conceptions can be understood on the basis of the earlier tradition in kindergarten teacher training. Many of the supervisors in the kindergartens had obtained their education at a time when teacher training was assumed to give the expertise; the work after the basic education was simply understood as application of the knowledge the kindergarten teachers already possessed. In the local tradition of kindergarten teacher training this conception can be evaluated as highly influential. Lately, the ideas of lifelong learning have been more emphasized among the college teachers.

Most of the college supervisors were also interested in developing new perspectives on the profession of the kindergarten teacher, with many of them emphasizing the "teachers as researchers" approach. This approach was little known to the supervisors in the kindergartens, possibly due to the tradition described in the above section.

Apart from the supervisors' conceptions of kindergarten teacher profession there was also variation in supervision conceptions and practices. The students' experiences of the supervisors can be classified into three categories: a more experienced colleague who learns together with a student, an "expert" who judges what is wrong and what is right, and a worker who carries out the obligation belonging to the job. In this stage of the analysis it can be assumed that the supervisors' own experiences during their education, the nature of their expertise, and the nature of their working environment are related to the ways in which they work as supervisors.

Due to these differences the practice periods were in many ways contradictory. Consequently, the learning environment consisted of various interpretations of children, pre-school education, professional practice in the kindergarten, development of expertise in the kindergarten etc. These various interpretations were notably expressed in the interaction between students and their supervisors. In all cases the practice periods offered the students opportunities to interact with two environments and to construct their knowledge in different learning settings.

The various learning processes

The students' interactive processes with their environment differed from each other. Some of the differences in the interaction were related to the characteristics of the environment, namely the various educational and working cultures of the kindergartens and the various characteristics of the supervisors. As described above the culture of the learning environment was in a process of change. Thus, many contradictions appeared within and between the environments. This situation formed the broader frame for the interactive processes between the students and the environment.

Some of the differences were related to the characteristics of the students, especially to their own orientation towards the environment and the interaction. The students' earlier experiences concerning children, education and life at the kindergarten laid their foundations for their further characteristics. The earlier experiences seemed especially to reflect the expectations and orientations of the students. The students were carrying their earlier experiences with them and into the interactive situations in which they were involved.

There was variation in the students' orientation towards the environment. The various orientations were classified into two categories: a person who seeks support from the learning environment and a self directed person who is in active interaction with the environment. The students' conceptions of pre-school education were also found to vary.

A student's ability to link the experiences she had obtained from different environments and situations seemed to be essential from the point of view of learning. How the student managed to construct a general view concerning the different culture of the environments and how she was able to synthesize them was especially important. Thus it seems evident that social and physical elements do not dominate learning but merely provide some kind of frame - limitations or opportunities - for learning. It is significant how learners interact with their environment and how they are able to use the environment as a learning resource. The transition process of the conceptions of the students seemed to be a very complicated combination of the earlier experiences and conceptions and the situated learning experiences.

Conclusions

The main purpose of the study is to clarify the nature of the learning processes in the development of expertise. Although the analysis is incomplete it seems evident that the study reveals important aspects of the nature of situated learning in expertise.

The development of expertise during teacher education seems to be just the beginning of the development process. The students' position in the kindergarten seems to be more or less marginal and their opportunities to develop their expertise are related to the educational and working culture of the kindergarten.

The culture of the kindergarten as such did not seem to dominate the learning opportunities of the student. Instead, the nature of the interaction between the student and the learning environment seemed to be more significant.

Due to the differences and transition processes, the most obvious characteristics of the environment were instability and transition. Learning in this context seemed to demand of the student very active orientation towards the environment.

I hope these findings can be applied in developing both theories of expertise development and practical solutions for teacher pre-service and in-service education. It seems to me that in the future education of kindergarten teachers will pay much more attention to the situational aspects of learning. Such attention may reveal the real problems the future teachers have in their learning processes.

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PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT: AN EARLY CHILDHOOD AND FAMILY STUDIES DEPARTMENT MODEL

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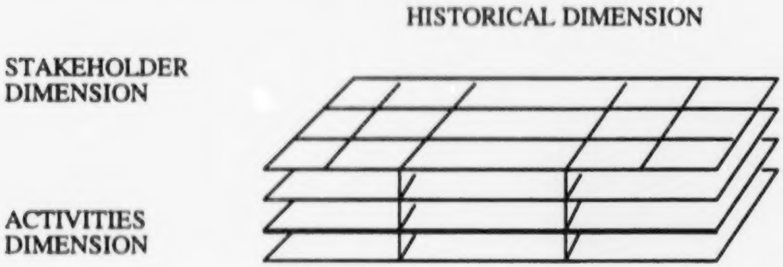
Everyone who teaches deliberates about how to support students' constructivist processes and encounters the recurring question "How can I maximize opportunities for learning and growth?" In an effort to address this issue, members of the Department of Early Childhood and Family Studies at Kean College of New Jersey designed a system of portfolio assessment, which has become an integral part of the evaluation process for undergraduate and graduate students. Portfolios represent the intersection of assessment and instruction, and they provide a framework for viewing evaluation as complex, multidimensional and dynamic. Development of metacognitive strategies, student empowerment and responsive program practice are also supported through portfolio assessment (Paulson & Paulson, 1990).

The portfolio assessment design, used by the department, is based primarily on the model of Paulson and Paulson (1990) and the research on stages of adult development (Knowles, 1980). It is also consistent with the principles of constructivism (DeVries & Kohlberg, 1990). A structured but personalized approach to professional growth, and the strong connection between assessment and instruction are emphasized. In addition, portfolio assessment is in keeping with appropriate early childhood practice and outcomes-based teacher education.

Maintaining portfolios for graduate and undergraduate students serves three primary departmental goals. First, assessment for college students is congruent with the department's position on appropriate assessment strategies for young children. Second, instruction and assessment are based on the principles of constructivism, which validate the importance of each student's role in self and shared reflection, goal setting, and personal responsibility for professional growth (Duff, Brown, & Scoy, 1995). Third, assessment involves the faculty in a collegial process of reflection and critical analysis of program outcomes.

An adaptation of The Cognitive Model for Assessing Portfolios (Paulson & Paulson, 1990) has provided a comprehensive conceptual framework for constructing and evaluating portfolios for students in the Department of Early Childhood and Family Studies. This model incorporates three dimensions; Activities, Historical and Stakeholder (See Table 1).

Table 1. The Cognitive Model for Assessing Portfolios.



Dimensions of the Cognitive Model for Assessing Portfolios

The Stakeholder Dimension of the Cognitive Model for Assessing Portfolios involves the relationship of mutual investment shared between each student and faculty advisor. Throughout their course of study, students work with their advisor to choose the samples or artifacts for their portfolio which they feel will best reflect their growth and professional development. Student choice supports the concept of active involvement in assessment, as an essential and vital part of the construction of knowledge (Wadlington, 1995). In addition, as the student and advisor work together to select and analyze information, each invests time and energy that deepens the commitment of both to continued professional growth (Jones, 1993).

The Historical Dimension illustrates a tri-cycle temporal perspective, which is divided into three phases. These phases include a baseline record of performance, transactions, which document changes evidenced in portfolio samples or artifacts over time, and summative information that can be used to verify learning outcomes, at the end of the student's course of studies. Samples collected represent each of these three phases in students' portfolio development. For undergraduates, the three phases are commensurate with the sophomore, junior, and senior levels. The phases of the Historical Dimension for the graduate program are divided between introductory or core courses, specialized courses and electives, and the Advanced

Seminar Research Project, which is the culminating experience for students obtaining a master's degree.

The Activities Dimension describes the contents of the portfolio, and illustrates the department's philosophy. The focus of this dimension is on nurturing the development of professional early childhood educators through a combination of maturation, experience, and reflection. Activities are in keeping with commonly accepted developmental goals and tasks of the profession of early childhood education. Each activity emphasizes self-assessment and reflection, which are primary vehicles for internalizing the values and standards of the profession (NAEYC, 1991; Wadlington, 1995).

The Activities Dimension defines what is to be collected in the portfolio, as well as what is minimally acceptable. The content of the portfolio includes the work of students and analysis of their performance in classroom and field settings. Writing, philosophy/professional development, and practice are the three categories of the Activities Dimension included in the department's model. Multiple samples are collected for each category to strengthen the validity of judgments about performance (See Table 2).

Table 2. Suggested Graduate Portfolio Components.

ACTIVITIES DIMENSION	ACTIVITIES & ANALYSIS
PHASE ONE: CORE COURSES	
1. Professional Development	Professional Growth Plan (EC 5000)
2. Writing	Writing sample: Review of Literature (EC 5000) or Research prospectus (EC 5260)
3. Simulated Practice	Essay, with application of theory to practice (EC 5000)
4. Field Practice	Video of practice, with analysis (EC 5000)
5. Student Choice, Feedback Form & Journal Entries	Samples from course work & professional setting
Portfolio Advisor selected	Portfolio Conference (EC 5000)
PHASE TWO: SPECIALIZED COURSES AND ELECTIVES	
1. Professional Development	Written philosophy (EC 5881 or EC 5230)
2. Writing	Writing sample: Student chooses from Curriculum Project or Action Research
3. Simulated practice	Groups interaction-role play, scenarios
4. Field Practice	Shared video analysis
5. Student choice, Program Feedback Form, and Journal entries	Samples from field work, leadership role or course work
PHASE THREE: COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION AND ADVANCED SEMINAR PROJECT	
1. Professional development, Writing, Simulated Practice, Field Practice converge	Advanced Seminar Project (EC 5598 & 5599) & Comprehensive Examination
2. Student choice, Program Feedback Form, and Journal entries	

Writing

Writing is a crucial area of development for undergraduate and graduate students. Through the portfolio process, students are encouraged to engage in critiques of their writing through individual and group activities. Process writing, which includes brainstorming, prewriting, drafting, and editing, is emphasized (Hoskinsson & Thompkins,1994).

Samples of writing are collected at three specified intervals from a variety of contexts. Both students and faculty confer to clarify the process by which writing is to be judged. Writing samples are reviewed using criteria adapted from the Alverno College model as the primary source. This set of indicators includes organization, complexity, analysis, conventions, and context (See Table 3). On the graduate level, the Alverno model is supplemented by the American Psychological Association reference style and a University of Massachusetts Thesis Proposal Evaluation Form. Providing specific feedback and having students analyze models of effective writing are illustrative of strategies that are used to help students who need to improve their writing skills.

Table 3. Writing Assessment.

1=less exp. 2=mod. exp. 3=exp. 4=except. exp.	1	2	3	4
1. Reaching audience through ESTABLISHING OF CONTEXT (sources of thinking, documentation).	-----	-----	-----	-----
2. Reaching audience through VERBAL EXPRESSION (word choice, style, tone, i.e. scholarly).	-----	-----	-----	-----
3. Reaching audience through APPROPRIATE CONVENTIONS (usage, spelling, structure, format).	-----	-----	-----	-----
4. Reaching audience through STRUCTURE (sense of introduction/development/conclusion; focusing by main point made; paragraph).	-----	-----	-----	-----
5. Reaching audience through SUPPORT/DEVELOPMENT (organization of ideas, supports organization, idea generation).	-----	-----	-----	-----
6. Reaching audience through APPROPRIATE CONTENT (analytical approach, problem-solving process).	-----	-----	-----	-----
General assessment of stengths and weaknesses (write in paragraph form:)				

On the undergraduate level, specified writing samples include a research paper developed in four stages during the sophomore year. A lesson plan based on an observational study is developed during the junior year, and a narrative professional report to a child study team is developed during the senior year. Students are also encouraged to submit additional examples of their work, which they feel reflect their professional growth.

On the graduate level, there are three phases in the process of collection and assessment of writing. The first takes place during two specified courses in which a review of literature and a research proposal are developed. The second occurs during completion of three additional required and/or approved elective courses. Within this phase, students choose samples or artifacts from a variety of sources, which include a mini-research project, a review of the literature on a chosen topic, position papers, and essay tests. This phase culminates with a written comprehensive examination. The third includes the development of an Advanced Seminar Research Project, to be written for a professional audience. This project is developed in cooperation with a committee of department members, and progress is shared with the portfolio advisor.

Professional Development

The second area of the Activities Dimension is professional development. This aspect of the Activities Dimension offers a systematic approach by which students are encouraged to reflect on their own behavior and how it corresponds to the standards for the profession (Duff, Brown, & Scoy, 1995). In addition, members of the Department of Early Childhood and Family Studies have identified leadership and commitment to developmentally appropriate practice as desired outcomes for undergraduate and graduate students. Through professional development activities students' growth in these areas can be documented.

Information collected to record growth in the Activities Dimension includes development of a professional philosophy and growth plan. On the undergraduate level, sophomores complete a pre- and post-course self-assessment of motives and expectations entitled, "Myself as Teacher." Juniors develop a paper on their philosophy of early childhood education; working from the abstract prior to their concrete field experience. Seniors prepare a similar paper; this time basing their philosophy on actual field placement, which connects this concrete experience to theory.

During an introductory course, graduate students develop a professional growth plan, which includes goals for change during their course of study. A written professional philosophy, that connects theory and practice, is formulated in the next phase. The professional growth plan and philosophy are reflected upon and modified over time, utilizing structured judgments, based on professional development guidelines of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (1991). The third phase is completed during a two semester Advanced Seminar Research Project, which is shared with a professional audience through presentation of a workshop, submission of a grant, preparation of a manuscript for publication, or innovative leadership contribution to a professional organization .

Practice

The third facet of the Activities Dimension is practice. In the sophomore, junior, and senior years, undergraduate students engage in field practice of increasing length and intensity. In the sophomore year each student receives a checklist of performance behaviors developed by the department. The same checklist is utilized in both junior and senior field practice and includes a cycle of ongoing observation and feedback, video self-assessment, and shared analysis. The complete checklist has 29 items. An abbreviated sample of this checklist of performance behaviors follows (See Table 4).

Table 4. Checklist of Performance Behaviors.

THE STUDENT TEACHER:						
(1)	1	2	3	4	NA	arranges the environment purposefully for young children.
(2)	1	2	3	4	NA	searches out and provides various materials using library and other resources.
(3)	1	2	3	4	NA	presents the materials in ways that stimulate interest, enthusiasm and curiosity.
(4)	1	2	3	4	NA	organizes the materials in areas accessible for children.

The Activities Dimension of the graduate level encompasses simulated practice, as well as field practice. In specialized courses and informal study groups, graduate students simulate practice through working with scenarios, problems, and dilemmas, which encourage them to interact collaboratively to evaluate experiences and debate both personal and professional issues. This simulated practice culminates with the comprehensive examination. The comprehensive examination is written in essay format and requires students to formulate an action plan that responds to a specific early childhood or family studies problem or topic. A student's essay must demonstrate appropriate application of theory, research and personal insight. Each examination is read and responded to by three members of the Early Childhood and Family Studies Department. Thus, students are able to discuss their examination results and receive feedback from multiple sources.

Field practice focuses on classroom behavior and change at the school level. Shared video analysis of the graduate student as a practitioner, on-site college faculty and/or peer observation, and a documented statement about performance from the student's supervisor provide data about growth and development. Journals and narratives, as well as examples from children's projects, also yield some of the most important information about student's field practice.

Implementing and Maintaining Portfolios

To implement the portfolio process, the Early Childhood and Family Studies Department established the following steps. Students are introduced to portfolios through an entry course, which is identified at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. At that time, faculty and students' responsibilities are specified and criteria for selection of samples and artifacts are established. Advisors are selected who will meet periodically with their students to review the contents of the portfolio. To pilot the full process of analysis with an advisor over a student's course of studies, a random sample of 10 % of the undergraduate and 20 % of the graduate students were selected each year for three years, beginning in 1993-1994. Thus, in 1995-1996, each of the ten faculty members of the department will be the advisor for fifteen undergraduate and six graduate students.

Collecting and maintaining all portfolio samples and artifacts are cooperative processes between the student and advisor. Students are responsible for their portfolio and for making it available to their faculty advisor at specified and spontaneous intervals. Graduate students are asked to fill out program feedback forms at three specified intervals. These forms are intended to provide pertinent information about how the department can be more supportive of students' development. At the conclusion of their course of studies, on both the undergraduate and graduate level, all students have an exit interview with their advisor for the summative purposes of examining their own growth and reflecting on the context for learning provided by the department.

Conclusion

Having all faculty members involved in portfolio advisement has enabled heightened awareness of programmatic concerns and issues in the department. This process supports ongoing faculty reflection on whether existing instructional strategies require departmental changes or modifications. Analysis of portfolio data serves to help with evaluation of how well the teacher education program is meeting its goals. It also provides feedback about the impact of portfolio participation on students' classroom practices with children.

An examination of outcomes for alumni of the graduate program, who participated in constructing their own portfolio, indicated that all were implementing some type of portfolio assessment with children and/or families. Twelve of these students have shared their work on portfolio assessment through presentations at conferences and/or publication of articles. Thus, these graduates have also become better models of appropriate assessment standards for other practitioners to emulate.

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